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# SOME OLD FLEMISH TOWNS

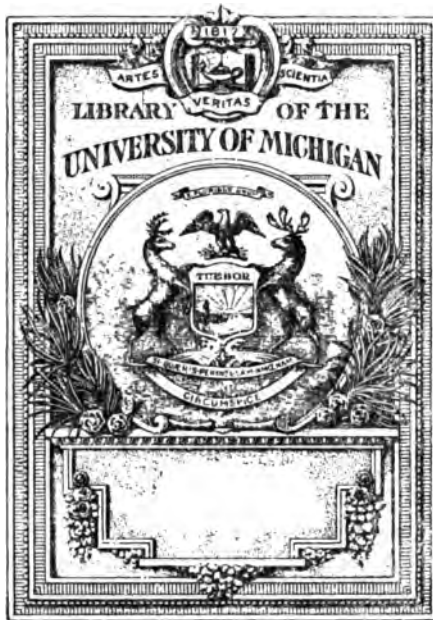


*YPRES · DIXMUDE · ALOST · DENDERMONDE ·  
UUDENAARDE · GHENT · TOURNAI · COMMINES ·  
BERGUES · COURTRAI · LILLE · DOUAI · BRUGES ·  
DAMME · MECHELEN · FURNES · NIEUPOORT · LOUVAIN ·*



WRITTEN AND PICTURED BY  
GEORGE · WHARTON · EDWARDS

UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN  
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*Some Old Flemish Towns*









FLEMISH LADY IN THE OLD COSTUME

THE  
EMISH  
BOWIE



Written and  
Designed by  
J. M. [illegible]



PLANNED LAYV IN THE 1948 CONGRESS

# Some Old Flemish Towns



Written and  
Pictured by  
George Wharton Edwards

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offat  
Yard  
& Co

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Published October, 1911

*Stacks*  
*Gift*  
*Mrs. Harlow Hatcher*  
*1-16-68*  
*671 729.291*

*To A....*

*"—The little house—  
The Cricket's chirp—  
Love, and the  
Glad sweet smile of her."  
(Poiley)*

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11

12



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## *Characteristics*

THE wide, flat, well-watered plain lying between the French and Dutch frontier is a region rarely explored by the traveler, and thus these cities and towns which enjoyed greatness and renown in the thirteenth, fourteenth and fifteenth centuries are almost unknown. The traveler sees Antwerp and Brussels, which have well nigh lost the character they once possessed, particularly the latter city, with its wide boulevards and Paris-like architecture, and then satisfied that he has done Belgium, passes on his way.

From the windows of the railway carriage one sees wide plains of striking fertility, dotted with farmsteads and comfortable red-tiled buildings rising from clumps of heavy trees, waterways bordered by tall poplars, and then a rock-like Colossus of masonry with gilded clock face which quite dominates the plain. This is the tower of Saint

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Rombold at Mechlin, Mechelen or Malines, as it is variously called, and typically Flemish.

While not so excitable as the French, the Flemish people share with their neighbors over the border, something of their enthusiasm, at least, when arriving or departing by train, and the great railway stations therefore present something of the bustle and hurry which is associated with the traveling multitudes throughout France. The red-capped Belgian officials run hither and thither up and down the long platforms, carrying in their hands rolls of official papers closely written and covered with figures, appearing from and disappearing into the various glazed offices, where sit clerks busily writing at high desks; "Commissionaires" clad in blue blouses with brass numbers displayed on leather bands on their arms rush hither and yon bearing bundles, bags and valises; getting in each other's way and followed by excited men and women trying to keep track of their belongings. Trains drawn by gayly-painted small engines trimmed with bands of polished brass, their fronts adorned with lanterns and heavy bands of bright red paint, are pulling in and pushing out long lines of small railway carriages marked "I., II. and III. Klasse." Some are marked "Reserve," others "Niet Rookten" (no smoking), and there are large boards painted black

upon which are displayed confused and incomprehensible figures denoting the arrival and departing time of trains to and from the coast.

Ask a question quietly of one of the gold-laced, red-capped officials, and one will be rewarded by hardly a glance of recognition, but approach him with lifted hat, elevated shoulders and a show of excitement, or better still, suppressed fury, and he is all attention and politeness. The information which he will impart may not be correct, but it will be voluble and vehement and he will go out of his way to direct you. He is all attention, will give you his entire sympathy, and the more details concerning your private history or that of your family, and your future plans which may or may not be germane to your original question, which you impart to his willing ears, the more interest will he (seem to) take in you, and should you mayhap miss your train he is all sympathy for you and will untiringly and patiently plan a new schedule in your behalf, so that it is difficult not to admire him for what he is, and forgive him for all that he is not. It is the fashion in France and England to rail at the Belgian and ridicule some of the most commendable of his traits, but I for one found much to admire during the period of my residence in Antwerp, mixing with all classes of society and studying parts of the coun-

#### 4 *SOME OLD FLEMISH TOWNS*

try rarely visited by travelers. There is, of course, much to criticise from our standpoint, but I have a most delightful and agreeable recollection of the good qualities of the Flemings as a people and they certainly compare most favorably with the classes of any other country. It should be known to the traveler that the Flemish red-capped "Chef de Gare," with his bundle of manuscript under his arm, is a government official, and is not appointed to his position as an aid to travelers. His duty is to look after the trains, and not the tourists. He has nothing to do with tickets or luggage; such matters are for the "Commissionaires," and it is to them that the tourist should apply for aid in making his train. All one has to do on descending from a train is to stand still and call out "Commissionaire," and one instantly appears at one's elbow. He is generally an old soldier clad in a blue or gray linen smock, and bears, as I have said, a numbered badge on his arm or cap. These men are not employed by the railway, but are licensed as carriers, and have to purchase a penny ticket admitting them to the platform. He will attend to the luggage and after having it weighed by an official, who will write you out a paper check bearing the weight and description, for which he expects two cents for his trouble, will hand this over to the "Commissionaire" with a

bow, and he in turn will deliver it to you. You are then required to give him another two cents, and an equal amount to the truckman who trundled your belongings to the scales, after which, bestowed in the railway carriage overhead (if a portmanteau), your "Commissionaire" takes off his cap to you and wishes you a pleasant journey and then seeks another client. One must go through with this formula patiently if one wishes to travel comfortably. People here have plenty of time and are not to be hurried, so when one grows accustomed to the so-called "red tape," it is not unpleasant or annoying at all, at least this is my experience. Even in the tram cars in the cities, one experiences little acts of courtesy which seem strange and delightful to one fresh from the subways of New York. Here the conductors (as we would call them) are a most courteous and deserving body of men who work long hours and yet do not show irritation or fatigue. The tram cars are divided into two classes with a door between, and differ but slightly in that the first class has cushions on the benches which run lengthwise. The conductors are called "Receveurs," and upon collecting a fare they hand one small white ticket as receipt. Often a passenger will hand him a penny (five centimes) as a perquisite, and for this he will smile, thank you and raise his cap po-



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lately. His wages are pathetically small, so small favors are appreciated and net him a considerable sum. One never sees rudeness on the part of these men and accidents are, I am told, rare. The cars stop only at stations called "Arrets Facultatifs." Of course, these are only in the country; in the towns the service is much like our own, stopping at the will of the passenger.

The Flemish women apparently have little need of a Suffragette Movement in this quaint country. Indeed, at first sight, one gets the impression that all of the important work of the shopkeepers is done by women, who seem to labor from early morning until late at night, while the men are to be seen at all hours sitting before the small tables of the cafés, drinking and smoking. This impression is, of course, corrected later on to an extent, but nevertheless, the women do manage a great deal of the small businesses at least of the country, and the men as a rule do have a very easy time of it. In the market places, women preside over the stalls, and all the milk carriers are women, who may be seen sitting in small green carts laden with polished brass cans and drawn by black dogs of ferocious mien. This is one of the characteristic sights of the country, and in the market or Grande Place, drawn up for the morning inspection by the police, is one not to be for-

gotten. The dogs and wagons are carefully inspected, as well as the milk, but it seems to me this was not as carefully done as it might have been, for the milk is exposed to the air in the large cans, and is dipped up with tin cups and poured forth into the buyers' measures or pans with entire disregard of sanitary rules. It seemed to me that more care was taken with the condition of the dogs, their harness and the appearance of things, rather than the really necessary care of handling the milk, but it may be that I am wrong. I am told that a large number of police inspectors are on duty and that the tests are held at unusual places not known beforehand to the vendors, so that the watering of the milk is quite uncommon. The detection is punishable by heavy fine, and even the forfeiture of license. It might seem cruel to force the dogs to draw such heavy loads as I have seen on the roads in the early morning. — A buxom woman sitting among a half dozen huge polished brass cans securely packed in by prettily braided bands of straw, and drawn by two and sometimes three large black dogs with dripping jowls and bloodshot eyes, but these dogs are trained to the work and really seem to enjoy it. They are of a special breed and quite valuable, bringing often as much as sixty or seventy-five dollars, so that it will be seen they are well fed

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and cared for. At each house where they deliver milk, there will be a plate of food for them. They are styled "Chiens de Trait," and the breeding of them is one of the recognized occupations. I have seen many of them, and I have never yet seen a real case of cruelty connected with them, so that one's sympathy is usually misplaced and due to misinformation. Indeed, in many of the towns there are associations devoted to their welfare and there are rules enforced against the employment of dogs under a certain size and weight, and establishing a standard of burden, applicable to the strength and size of the dog.

In the market places the women will be found in greater numbers than the men, presiding over the stalls of fresh vegetables or fine yellow cheeses; ruddy-cheeked, healthy-looking women they are, too, and often quite comely. One is struck by their happy, contented air, as if they found real pleasure in their work. They are generally bare-headed, only the very old ones now wear the beautiful lace caps with its pendant flaps. They wear their hair neatly braided and coiled. As a rule, they have heavy whalebone umbrellas for rainy weather, huge constructions with thick handles often trimmed with brass. Invariably they wear a large blue apron furnished with capacious pockets into which their hands are thrust. They

are ready at repartee and enjoy controversies with one another to which all lend attention. It is well not to trifle with these Amazons, who are so well able to take care of themselves, and the police walking to and fro among them, ever watchful, are inclined to take their part in any dispute with a stranger.


The wooden shoe is fast vanishing in the cities; indeed, the peasant quite scorns it, except in rainy weather, and the women are well and trimly shod in leather, taking evident pride in their neatness. In the small shops and often in the larger ones, the woman is in evidence, seated behind a sort of desk on a raised platform. This is especially noticeable in the "Estaminets," or cafés. Here she presides over the daily business, passing out the orders on the kitchen or the cellar. She has always a cheery word of welcome for the patrons, and a courteous nod for the stranger. Here are no bars such as we have in America; instead, is a sort of counter, well laden with bottles of wine and cordial or the various syrups which are in great demand. To her, every visitor or patron lifts his hat on entering and leaving. Often the daughter of the proprietor will be found waiting upon the customers, who would never think of offering rudeness to mademoiselle.

One is struck with the neatness and thrifty

appearance of the Flemish women in contrast to the slouchy unkemptness of the men of the same class, who are, and look "beery." Even on Sunday, their great day of rest and recreation, the men never appear to advantage, while the women wear their finery gracefully and are often quite attractive. All in all, they are most capable and have contributed in a large degree to the prosperity which Belgium enjoys, and has enjoyed for so many years.

Of course the traveler will not come in contact, to any great extent, with the upper classes, but a few facts for his information concerning these may not be out of place in these random and very superficial notes. Society in the kingdom is divided into grades; beginning with the ancient nobles of the Netherlands who flourished before and during the Crusades, are the representatives of the families of D'Arenberg, which was of German, and De Ligne of Austrian origin, Merode, Chimay, Croy, and Lalaing. These are the principal houses of Flanders and some of the sons are officers in the Royal Guards or "Guide," the "crack" regiment of the country. These families have magnificent estates and castles and some of them town houses in Brussels, one of them, the most famous of private palaces. The D'Arenbergs have a house in Brussels in the Petit Sablon,

which is enclosed by a high wall in which there is a large and beautiful garden exquisitely kept. Here formerly dwelt Count Egmont. The D'Arenbergs are possessed of large means and are noted for their beneficent charities. The families named above stand at the head of the list of exclusive society and their names are prominent in the high official list and offices of the government. Indeed, it may be said that they hold or have held all the high posts in the government of the country. I am told as a curious fact that while literature is quite looked down upon as a profession, artists and sculptors enjoy high favor and rank with the leaders of the Bar and "haute Finance." Of these latter, many, if not most, are Jews. Of course this is but a repetition of history, for in the great days of Flemish prosperity only Jews and Lombards were allowed to trade in money. But nowadays these Jews stand high in society, I am told, and in their entertainments, vie with the hospitality and display of the highest families who are pleased to accept their invitations. My informant, however, adds that there are some circles, of great aristocracy if poor in wealth, into which these successful traders never have gained admittance, and that a feeling of increasing distrust is being manifested by the people against certain of their practices. This, he says, may be



due to the efforts of the Roman Catholics, who form an exceedingly powerful factor in the government. The Jew here, as elsewhere, is a great spender, but it must be said that he always aims at the very best and gets it, too, for that matter. One day at the Casino at Blaukenberghe, the fashionable watering-place on the coast, I heard one call the waiter and ask for the best cigars he had, and upon the waiter handing him a tray containing some large branded ones, selected one, asked for a match; lighted it and puffed the smoke; blew it through his nostrils critically; looked at it; asked the waiter, "How much are those?" "Thirty francs," replied the latter. Then, said this son of the Chosen People, "Just fill up my case, will you?" The bill for the seven cigars was just two hundred and ten francs, about forty-one dollars in our money. I once smoked a cigar costing one dollar, and I liked it. I wonder how those six dollar ones tasted!

I have often been asked, when my enthusiasm for Flemish life has found a willing listener, whether there is a national school of literature in Belgium, and if I can name any Flemish authors who have achieved fame, and then I am forced to acknowledge that the profession in Belgium has few rewards and little encouragement, although the Flemish are proud of their writers,

and never tire of quoting the author of "Leuw van Vlaanderen."

There are many brilliant writers in Brussels and Antwerp, who continue to live by literary work, but unless their reputation has been made elsewhere beyond the borders of the country, in Paris or in London, their pecuniary reward is small. In spite of the lamentable fact, there is a flourishing school of literary workers in the Flemish tongue, and these are making themselves known by research into the voluminous historical records in Ghent and Louvain. Both Gachard, and Kervyn van Lettenhove have discovered facts long buried of great historic interest and value, which have resulted in the complete reconstruction of the history of Flanders. In Ghent, and also Liege, great masses of historical data were found which lay buried for hundreds of years until unearthed by Messieurs Northumb and Juste, and M. Pirenne is now engaged upon a colossal piece of historical work which has the sanction of the state. The younger school of writers follow in the footsteps of Maeterlinck and Verhaeren, but it must be said that socially the author is well nigh without recognition in Flanders, for the Belgians as a class are not great readers of fiction; the newspapers, with the "Feuilleton," seem to fill their want in that respect; then



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too, the journals require that the writer shall devote himself to the question of the hour, and every bit of news, whether true or false, is made to demonstrate the policy of the journal which prints it, whether bearing upon the church or state. Serious literature is then not greatly encouraged in Flanders, and the production of bound books is limited, but the pamphlet is quite popular because of its cheapness of production, therefore this form of publication is very popular and not unremunerative to the author. The lecturer, as we know him, is unknown in Flanders. In his place is the Conferencier, generally a member of the academy of letters and a person of literary distinction who is engaged in drawing rooms to instruct small audiences upon questions of the hour to which he has given serious and careful study, and which he is competent to discuss and elucidate from several points of view. The Conferencier must be very brief in his remarks and very much to the point, for the Belgian soon tires of talk. Generally he will not listen to any speaker who consumes more than a scant half hour, and he expects from the Conferencier a succession of gatling gun-like apothegms all having definite bearing upon the question. So, while Belgium is undoubtedly absorbed in material and industrial matters, it has in a way a literary life. In the arts



of painting and sculpture, the Flemings are certainly recovering their long-lost, dormant preëminence. The young painters of to-day are brilliant technicians, if they are not great colorists, but it must be said that most of them have achieved their education and success in Paris and Munich. Alma-Tadema, to mention the greatest of the modern Belgian painters, was taught in the Antwerp Academy, although he has for years painted and lived in England.

In sculpture, Flanders has produced a great array of famous names, headed by Simonis, whose notable statue of Godfrey of Bouillon stands in the Palace Royale, in Brussels, and by the fine statues of Van Dyck and Rubens. The art of the modern sculptor in Belgium has been devoted to the restoration of the wonderful cathedrals and town halls throughout the kingdom, and the Counts Chapel at Courtrai, which was formerly covered with statuary in niches, destroyed by the soldiers in the wars, has been entirely restored during the last twenty years. The same is true of Ghent and Louvain. The architects are busily employed throughout the kingdom, and these, indeed, reap golden harvests because of the craze for reconstruction of the great cities, which are expanding to such an extent that the fortifications are again being extended in Antwerp and Brussels;

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wide boulevards taking their place on which the merchant princes are constructing veritable palaces. So the profession of architecture is perhaps the best paid of all at present, and is attracting the young men to it by the prizes and rewards offered by the state; thus from the foregoing it will be seen that the literary and artistic side of Belgian life is not entirely dormant as might be feared from a cursory view of the situation, and while the compensation is small according to our American standard, the professions do afford something of a livelihood. The artists sell pictures in their studios to amateurs; not for large sums, it is true, for the contrary is the fact, but the amateurs do visit the studios and really purchase from the artist without the intervention of the dealer, or middleman, as with us here in America, but the prices paid are small, in the extreme. I am told that it is rare for an artist in Belgium to make even as much as one thousand dollars a year from his profession, and many of the journalists and authors make even less than this sum. But I must say that I never heard complaints of a lack of patronage from any member of these professions all the time I was among them; they are optimistic to a wonderful degree and seem to see a roseate future before them which one hopes may be realized.



The multitudinous functions of the police in Flanders, and their evident power and authority to interfere and order matters usually left to the discretion of the citizen in America, are very strange and amusing to the traveler. Indeed, many of the matters under the jurisdiction of the Flemish police would in America be dealt with only in a court of law; but here the greater part of these functions seems to the traveler to be exercised quite independently of the magistrate, and without any warrant or writ. The minuteness and the thorough character of the work of the Flemish policeman is, therefore, a constant source of surprise and often of alarm, for one does not know at what moment an officer may rap at one's door and demand to know of one's private matters or business. I am told that he undertakes at night to see that your street door is locked at what he considers a proper hour, and be it known that in many of the towns, the curfew bell rings nightly, warning the law-abiding citizen that it is time that he was indoors. The police see that the chimneys are cleaned at regular intervals, and make regular and periodical inspections of premises, not forgetting, I am told, to inquire into various matters of domesticity as well. He is empowered to forbid and to stop the piano or any instrumental music, or singing with open

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windows, and I am told, in some of the towns, no piano may be played without permission after ten o'clock at night. He acts also as food inspector, and keeps a sharp watch upon the itinerant milk wagons and the milk. Frequently he upsets the milk into the gutter and arrests the peddlers for adulterating the milk. I have seen some of these episodes, and they are quite exciting, the people gathering in crowds, seeming to come up from between the very stones of the market-place, so quickly do they gather, and there is shouting and screaming on the part of the malefactors who are indeed lucky if their license number is not forfeited.

The other day I had occasion while in Bruges to get some American money exchanged into that of Belgium or France, for they accept the latter here at face value, and leaving my traps at the railway station, where I also left A—— with a Flemish illustrated paper to amuse her while I was gone, I sallied forth in quest of a "Bureau de Change." "Did Monsieur know of a bureau?" I inquired of a policeman just outside, politely saluting him. "But yes, if M'sieur will seek the number 900 at the right, near the statue, he will find one," and he touched his cap to me. I departed down the long stretch of avenue opposite, at the end of which appeared a vista of

dark green trees; to this I directed my steps, scanning frequently the numbers on the lintels of the doors of the handsome houses, most of which seemed to be closed for the summer, for it was in the month of August, although not warm. The statue to which I had been directed is in the center of the square, at the lower end of which stands the fine old gate, its twin yellowish-gray towers appearing above the trees. How deserted are these streets of Bruges! I do not refer to the ancient ones now, but to the long lines of boulevards, new avenues with high-sounding names, lined with rich-looking modern houses of a yellowish stone, with doorways flush with the pavement, or nearly so, save for a raised stone step or two; doors large, much empaneled, and bearing heavy brass rods and lions' heads, but rarely with door knobs; thus there is no visible means of opening these ponderous doors from the outside. One pulls at an ornamental handle protruding at the side of the doorway and one hears somewhere within the tinkle of a bell. Then the door is opened slowly and with reluctance and your business is demanded by a more or less fierce-looking servant. The Flemish house is all within doors, outwardly the walls are plain if rich-looking, but inside the owner lavishes his money. Indeed, in all classes of society this

fact is evident. The Fleming buys the best of everything that his purse will afford. He has one room always upon which he lavishes all his available cash; in this he places the very best furniture he can afford, and this is his showroom and it is generally kept closed. The family (I am speaking now of even the best class of Flemings), will live in another room or set of rooms, much more plainly furnished, and really they are easier in these than among the finery of the,—what I may call, ceremonious apartments. I have known of people in very good circumstances, who thriftily let their house for the season to an American family, to whom the owner delivered a written and stamped (*papier timbre*) paper of instructions, and commands as to how the furniture should be used, and each week during their occupancy an agent called and inspected the premises to see if by chance the Americans were using it properly. This so got on their nerves that they cancelled the lease and went to a hotel—to the amazement and disgust of the owner. Therefore, before hiring a furnished house in Flanders, one would do well to consider these pros and cons very carefully.

To return to the incident of the money changing, I at length found the number of the house to which I had been directed, in a large palatial

row of seemingly private residences. The doorway was like all the others in the street — heavy, of polished oaken panels, and furnished with a massive brass rod held in the mouths of two lions' heads. At one side was an ornamental bell pull and this I seized. In response, a bell clanged somewhere and after an interval the door opened slowly and a staid-looking man in uniform regarded me. After hearing my business he ushered me up three marble steps in a narrow high hall, painted white and veined to imitate marble. At the left were three closed doorways. The manservant opened the first of these, ushering me into a large, well-lighted, sparsely-furnished room in which sat two men and one woman on uncomfortable chairs. I bowed to these solemn people politely, seating myself on one of the uncomfortable chairs. I think I waited full twenty minutes — it seemed much longer — before my turn came to enter the glazed door which I found admitted clients to the office, or bureau as they call them here. No one told me when to apply to this door; I had to judge for myself just how long it took for my predecessor to transact her business, for it was the woman who preceded me. When I opened the glazed door, I saw a narrow high counter across the space before it. The room was flooded with light from a large double window giving



on a lovely garden in which was a fountain splashing, while large white and crimson poppies fairly dazzled one's eyes. At a desk sat a small man, whose hair was brushed pompadour fashion, without seeming to see me or indeed to know that I was in the room, although the noise I made in opening and closing the door must have so informed him. He seized several sheets of what seemed to be bonds with coupons attached and began hurriedly to count them, making figures upon a sheet before him. It was so apparent to me that this show of business was intended to impress me with his importance and the immense cares resting upon him that I could not help smiling, and when at length he finished his count, and glanced absently up at me, standing at the counter or barrier, the smile must have still been visible, for he jumped up, saying, "Eh bien, M'sieur?" When I explained that I was a traveler and desirous of changing some American money, his face took on another and entirely different expression; he became most affable, rang a bell, and the solemn manservant entering, gave him directions to accompany me to an address where he assured me I would find a money changer, and with many bows waved me away. What he had expected of me when I entered I cannot imagine, but whatever it was, he was immensely relieved. The man-

servant accompanied me to the money changer, which was in just such another fine-looking house, and there I laid down ten ten-dollar American banknotes, and received for them two goodly rolls of gold and one of silver pieces. I hastened back to A—, who by this time thought all manner of dreadful things had happened to me, and who was even then considering taking a carriage and driving to the Consulate to put the police in search of me.

The funeral customs of the Flemish are strange to an American, hired messengers going from house to house leaving at each a formidable-looking printed card nearly the size of a sheet of foolscap, with a heavy black border, announcing the death and giving the date of the funeral. I am told that, in some towns near the Dutch border, when the door is opened this messenger steps inside and in a solemn voice reads the announcement to the household. During the days preceding the funeral, friends of the family call and must be received and entertained; refreshment is nearly always served. My informant mentioned one occasion when an acquaintance who had lost his wife stood with his children and received more than two hundred people. Without divine service the friends and family come together on the day of the funeral and start for the cemetery; out of re-

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spect the neighbors in the street close the shutters and lower their shades, and the street thus presents a melancholy appearance. Before the door of the bereaved house stands the "Lijk Koets" or hearse, a most depressing vehicle, more so than our hearses in America, open on all sides, at each corner a post upholding a sort of heavy canopy covered with heavy black-enameled metal palms and surmounted by a black cross; the coffin is underneath on a raised platform, and all is heavily shrouded and canopied in thick black hangings with heavy fringe edging. The wheels are high and enameled black. The hubs are of shining silver plate; the horses are shrouded in black palls reaching to the ground, their eyes seen through large black round holes cut for them in the head cloth. Invariably there are four of these heavily-draped horses, and they walk with a very slow, measured pace through the scenes where once the present poor occupant of the hearse passed a peaceful existence.

The coffin is generally of oak and lined with white muslin; screws close it, and upon it are placed wreaths of black and white beads and artificial flowers; sometimes these flowers are real, and quite fill the hearse and even are piled up on the roof. Beside the hearse walk from eight to twelve men in somber black, with tall silk

hats about which is a crêpe band with long streamers. Sometimes these men wear three-cornered hats, and long circular cloaks, and formerly an individual hired for the purpose walked before the hearse systematically wiping his eyes and pretending to be overcome with woe. It is said that these men, called "Dragers," are going out of fashion, and my informant told me of seeing them returning from funerals sitting in the hearse and in a condition of drunkenness. I never saw anything of this sort, I must say, and I only include it here because of the evident seriousness of my informant. In some cities the child's hearse consists, it is said, of a coach from which the wheels have been removed, wooden runners taking their place, and above them is fixed a keg of water which is allowed to drip upon the cobblestones over which the runners slide, but I never saw this either. My informant says that women as a rule do not go to the cemetery at the funeral, only the men and men friends of the family. There an intimate friend or acquaintance will make a long speech extolling the virtues of the deceased, and when all is said and done, a box or plate is passed around for the benefit of the parish poor, after which all return to the house, where a repast is served.

The impressiveness of the interior of a church

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is greatly heightened if one by chance sees it while the vespers are being celebrated. There is then just sufficient light to show properly the beautiful tracery and shape of the tall windows and the immense arches and columns of the choir. On the great altar, candles are burning in the great candlesticks, lighting up the dim paintings. Perchance the Gregorian chant fills the great building with its solemn notes, the silvery voices of the boys are heard and the smoke of the swinging censers wielded by crimson-clad acolytes ascends in clouds in the dim chancel. Then as the service proceeds, candle after candle suddenly ignites, the flame traveling from one to the other until finally it reaches the one over all the great fabric of the altar surmounted by the figure of the Virgin and turns into relief all the massive details and flourishes. Then a collection is made, the priests passing metal dishes or sometimes tin boxes furnished with a spout into which the coin is dropped. Then follows the beadle, in a cocked hat, and much silver lace, armed with a huge cane or staff with a silver knob. This individual seems to think himself of the greatest importance, and quite awes one as he stalks about. Indeed, upon one occasion, a little American girl, who was with her parents in one of the cathedrals abroad, when one of these officials walked majestically by, tapping the pave-

ment with his staff, followed him with her wondering eyes, and turning to her mother, she asked, "Mamma, Mamma, is that God?" As the priest passes along, this official brings down his metal-shod staff with a loud noise upon the stone pavement, a boy jangles a bell at the side of the altar, the priest clad in white and gold elevates the Host before the kneeling congregation; then the beadle or major-domo with the staff once more becomes active as he walks solemnly between the columns, while the big bell in the tower above tolls and the gathered multitude presses out of the swinging, leather-covered doors into the twilight which now is fast becoming darkness.

The streets in the residential section of the smaller towns are somewhat gloomy; the houses of neat appearance are closely shut. It would be interesting to see the inside of one of them, but we know no one in the town to whom to apply for this purpose. The large windows are defended against prying eyes by embroideries, paneled linen curtains, or by Holland blinds, and there is generally a large china vase filled with flowers on the sill inside. Some of the largest and best-kept of these houses have polished brass plates affixed to the door panel, or against the frame, inscribed with the name of the occupant and the word "Avocat" or "Notaire," and these seem to be of the wealthy

class. As I understand, the "Notaire" or notary, has no especial training in the law, but here he discharges the duties of a solicitor, as applied to the transfer of real estate or property and is the recognized custodian of family papers and legal documents. A great deal of ordinary banking business passes through his hands, and thus he has charge of much if not all of the money and property of his clients. He is, therefore, the most important man in these small towns, for not only is he the banker, but the legal adviser of the district, and as such charges a commensurate fee for his services, which are in such demand that he often manages to acquire a very considerable fortune. I have met some of these men at the inns throughout the country, at the tables d'hôte, and I found them to be polished gentlemen, who invariably sought to give us all the information in their power, and took pains to direct our pilgrimages to many interesting spots. One of these discoursed upon the writings of Sir Walter Scott, with which he was more familiar than I, as he speedily found, and his eyes twinkled over his triumph. He was traveling with his wife, a placid gentle woman whom we found to be very deaf. He talked with her in Flemish until he found that I understood the language, then, raising his hands comically, he said in English, "Alas!

then I can have no more secrets, speaking with my wife here." He asked me if I believed that Sir Walter Scott wrote all those books, and if I did not think that he had been grievously overpaid for them. His wife addressed me in a low voice, speaking English remarkably well, too, saying that she liked "The Talisman," that it was about Richard the Third and Saladin, and better than the others, as it had less "swearing" in it. Although I replied, she said she could not hear me; then she smiled at us kindly and they both bowed to us, wishing us a pleasant journey, and left the room. After our meals we generally explored the town and the outskirts. It is characteristic of the country that, excepting those planted about the old walls and in the Place d'Armes, there are few trees to be seen; occasionally there are, to be sure, found clumps of Pollard willows, ash, oak and elm, but these are not large. The land outside the towns is mostly arable, with ripe grain fields, and they were beginning to cut and harvest it, but in a very leisurely fashion. The farm holdings, stacks and villages, certainly remind me of Cuyp's pictures. Some flax either steeping in the ditches or spread out to dry on the banks tainted the air. The smell of the canals is often most overwhelming, but I presume that those who dwell here become used to it. Sometimes, in



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making my sketches, I would seat myself on one of the bridges, and this act usually attracted the notice of the Flemings. Men, women and children would crowd the windows and then flock out to see what I was about. They are curious about the stranger, but not intolerant, and are greatly amused at my sketches, but unwilling to pose for me.

The churches are full of pictures and figures of the Virgin. Many, if not most of them, have little waxen figures hanging upon an iron circle like an ancient toasting rack. They were molded like arms, hands, legs and heads, and there were some shaped like hearts; to our eyes they were ridiculous, but to the eye of faith, no doubt, most satisfying. Many women in long black cloaks, mostly very old women, I note, are in the churches all day long kneeling before the images and altars. I saw few men there.

At dinner a handsome buxom Flemish lady sat opposite to me. I studied her covertly as a type, and noted a strange fixity of expression of countenance, and after a time it became positively painful to watch her. The Flemish woman is so placid, and devoid of any enthusiasm or seemingly of any emotions whatever, that it must be intolerable to have such always before one. I observed some handsome women in the streets, but these



FLEMISH FISHING BOAT



have a most peculiar expression of eyes and mouth, a projection of the upper lip which is not very agreeable. I am told that these women are kind and even-tempered, but of this I cannot judge.

One is told that the living is remarkably inexpensive here in the small towns. My informant states that he lived with a fine family, that of a baron in reduced circumstances, in very comfortable style for fifty francs a month. This is interesting if true, but I could not find any such reduced families and so the bills I paid were by no means so small. The hotels charge as a rule, about two dollars and a half a day per person, with pension rates of about two dollars.

In one of the churches we found a painted figure of St. Fiacre, the tutelary deity of all "cabbies." He was arrayed in the robes of a bishop and held a large book in his hand. I ventured to suppose this was the "Editio Princeps" of the book of fares. In the chronicle of St. Pharon, Bishop of Meaux, his patron, he says, "My fader and moder engendred or begat me in an yle of Scottlande named Hyrlonde." The life he led as a hermit in a wood near Meaux may be read at length in the legend named in "Latin Legenda Aurea, in Englysshe, the Golden Legende, for lyke as golde passeth all other metals,

so this boke exceedeth all other bokes: Imprinted at London by Wynken de Worde." That this Scotch Irishman was a favorite of Heaven in every part is manifest from the following: "He sate on a stone moche thoughtful and wroth, wherefore if our Lord had before shewed greate myracles by him, yet greater and more mer-vaylous myracle was mede for hym, for the Stone whereon he sate by the will of God waxed and became softe as a pylowe to the end that it sholde be more able and ease for hym to syt on, and it was caved somewhat as a pyt where he sate on, and for testyfycation and profe of this myracle, the sayd stone is yet kept within his chirche, and many sike folke have been and are dayly heled there of dyverse sekenesses only to touche, and to have touched the sayd stone."

In this church, which was a small one, there were no less than six confessionals. A—— said that the people must be very sinful to require so many. They are small carved boxes with many figures of saints upon them, all surrounded by rococco ornament, and worn to a polish by much handling and rubbing. Each of these had a priest in it, and two women, one on each side of him, confessed alternately. We accordingly drew as near as we could to see all we could of the ceremony, to the great annoyance of the priest, no doubt,

who could plainly see us through the lattice although we could not see him. This confessional is like three boxes abreast; in the middle one sits the priest, and there is in each of the side boxes a stool to kneel upon. There a woman confessed through the grating to which the priest applies his ear, first on one side and then on the other, rolling first to the right and then to the left. It is said that the priest does not know the person who confesses to him, but I doubt this, for here in this church the boxes were in a line and he certainly could see the women as they passed. I noted that he held a handkerchief over his face, but there was a candle burning before him which lighted his face and hand. Some of the women were done in a moment, but others confessed a long time. They were kneeling in long rows and as soon as one finished another took her place. I found the priests most civil, polite even, and obliging in the extreme. I made it a rule to salute them whenever I met one in the street, and this courtesy on my part smoothed our pathway through the country most marvelously. Many of these men are highly educated and it was a pleasure to converse with them, so well informed are they upon matters of world interest. It struck me as remarkable that while the Protestant tourist, in walking through the churches here to

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look at the paintings, statuary and carvings, treads as lightly and as reverently as he can, the men and women who are employed in cleaning and taking away the chairs, make or seem to make all the noise they can, being, nevertheless, good Catholics. We always took care never to cross before the great altar without making obeisance, and this, without inconveniencing us in any way, certainly gained for us privileges which otherwise would have been denied us.

The Flemings occupy a peculiar position in that they try to resemble the French who laugh at them, and they are affiliated with the Dutch who hate them for their ways. I met one of the latter at table who railed at them, asking me if Amsterdam was not a much finer city than the one we were in; that the houses there are built of cheerful nice clean brick, the streets better paved and so on. I did not agree with him, at which he seemed so put out that I was obliged to say that I only differed with him for the sake of learning from him. To bring him out, I agreed that they made no good cheese anywhere but in Holland, that Stilton was not good cheese. Then he complained loudly of the streets and said that the sanded floor of the dining-room made him quite ill, taking away his appetite.

The Dutch certainly make a great show of

cleanliness, but I think it only applies to matters not personal. To us, Venus herself would not be acceptable with dirty hands, but the Dutchman would not scruple to measure the black of his thumb nail, yet if there was a spot on the step before his door he would feel disgraced. The Flemish cities are very clean, and the streets are watered and swept daily. I have heard the Flemings reproached for their boorishness, bad manners and brutality, but I have seen nothing of this, or I should chronicle it. I know that in the streets the men and women engaged in watering and sweeping are particularly careful not to splash the pedestrian.

We always ate, whenever possible, at the table d'hôte, in order to accustom ourselves to the language. As a rule the company is a merry one at the end of the meal, if somewhat silent at the beginning of it, but upon our proclaiming ourselves Americans from New York (magical name), they seemed to wish to make us comfortable and, so to speak, feel at home. We would do our best to be entertaining, and they appreciated our efforts, but when company at table speak a language which one speaks imperfectly, one feels like an outsider; understanding nothing clearly that is said, one makes strange and frequent mistakes, sometimes ludicrous ones, but the Flemish people



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do not rail at or laugh at one, but always correct one gently and kindly. It is not easy for an American to pick up enough of the language to converse with tolerable fluency, but the Flemish people all try to speak French, and with this tongue one may meet them upon a common ground.

The Flemings seem to me to be like the impoverished descendants of an ancient family, inhabiting the ancestral manor-house, and busy with the sordid cares of everyday existence, heedless of the tradition of the ancient name and all that made it great, and willing to barter the dusty family portraits and dull plate for the glitter of new tinware and varnished, plushy parlor furniture. I know that this seems a harsh statement to make, but it is borne out by my careful observations of the people away from the great centers such as Antwerp and Brussels, where there is, it is true, a veneration of pride and interest in all that made for the greatness of Ancient Flanders; and even the brightness of the gilding upon the portals of the old house-fronts in the Grand' Place of the former or the architecture on the new boulevards of the latter, progressive town on the Scheldt does not bid me qualify my first statement.

Lovers of the old, and the art of that golden

period ushered in by the painters and architects of the seventeenth century, must feel strongly as I do, that these priceless records of the greatness of Flanders should be cared for and protected, and that it is sacrilege to lay restoring hands upon the town halls and the cathedrals, excepting with veneration and affection. So I looked askance upon certain restorations obviously like wounds upon the delicate fabrics, such as for instance the town hall at Oudenaarde, one of the wonders of that period, which brought forth the others at Louvain and Brussels, to mention only the chief examples. In a real sense Flanders, surviving the disastrous period of its wars and emerging from its troubles, is a work of art, as truly as its palaces and town halls, and it belongs to the world at large as much if not more than to its modern people; for so all of beauty escaping from the habitations of the material, and assuming the spiritual, ceases to be the property of the originators and becomes the possession of all who love art for its own sake. So painters and sculptors and architects learn here, within the narrow confines of this small country, the secrets of the arts laid bare by the great number of Renaissance movements, each speaking an intelligible language and delivering its message, making Flanders like unto a great university in which

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may be studied and mastered the language, not the dialect, but the living language, of art.

To the appreciative, Flanders is then primarily a work of art, to be preserved with an infinite care, but to the modern Fleming it is simply a wondrously fertile region, a great estate which supports a vast and growing population. A museum of antiquity to us, to them it is simply a home and country; thus they regard the homage of the cultured with a mild, amused wonder which finally arouses in them a sense of the value of their monuments only as regards the number of francs it brings them in the season. This, then, is the reason for their activity in cleaning up and restoring their town halls and cathedrals, belonging to an age which pursued beauty of form as a vocation without thought of the acquisition of mere money. The impression formed by the visitor who lands in Antwerp is a vociferous and bewildering tumult of foreign cries and sounds, strange-looking, blue-bloused workmen, huge hollow-backed Flemish horses dragging absurdly long low narrow wagons with thick small wheels, and apparently pursuing their own unguided ways along the crowded streets; of small two- and three-storied red-tiled shops lining the quays, each of which seems to be a drinking-place, of innumerable large signs relating to gin and other drinks,

of certain vast, granite, fortress-looking, castellated structures rising from a most beautiful gray stone esplanade, and over all the lovely lace-like spire of the cathedral which Napoleon coveted. The streets are not only filled to overcrowding with people, but they literally swarm with men, women, children and dogs; dogs everywhere, in harness, dragging small, heavy green carts loaded with shining brass milk cans and harnessed two and three abreast; dogs of savage mien, seemingly abused too, but this is not so. I find, on the contrary, they are valued and well cared for. The city hums with life and music, nowhere have I heard so many bands nor so much drumming. The Fleming loves the sound of the drum, and will leave his task at any hour to stand in a trance-like posture as a couple of men with drum and black, yellow and red flag pass by; where they are going, or what it is all about, I am sure I never found out. This city on the Scheldt long ago outgrew its bounds, and its population practices most of the daily occupations in the narrow streets, which hum with sounds of human voices and traffic like unto a great beehive. It has become a center of industry as it formerly was the center of political and artistic energy, but this picture which I have sketched of Antwerp of to-day is also true of all the other towns through-

out east and west Flanders in spirit, and if there are no crowds in the streets of Ypres and Courtrai or Furnes, it is because the Fleming, unable to find in these towns the busy existence for which he lives, is drawn to Antwerp and Brussels as by a magnet, and there he is content to remain; his work during the day and his café in the evening where he can smoke, drink his "Mops" or bock, and read his paper as the crowd passes by, this is for him paradise "Enow." The Fleming then resents the idea that he is a sort of custode or curator of a museum of antiquities; his aim is to put himself upon the plane of the German or the English in business dealing, and who shall deny him this right? Not I, for one. Are we Americans a whit more considerate of art than he? Do we care more for art or literature than he? Therefore the stones which I had gathered to cast at him, I let fall as secretly as I can, and with some shamefacedness too.

On different occasions I saw funeral ceremonies in the churches. The first was on a bright sunny day, and the big bell in the cathedral tolled while crowds of people gathered before the porch which was hung with heavy black curtains embroidered with silver and with heavy fringe of the same metal. On the face of the curtains

in relief are numerous strange symbols and crosses. Before the church porch stood a large heavily-gilded and carved sort of bus, its top surmounted by eight tall, gilded lanterns in which burned wax candles. These lanterns were upheld by gilded figures of angels and there was carving galore of wreaths and plumes, while bunches of heavy ostrich feathers waved at the corners. The wheels of the vehicle were picked out with gold, the hubs representing the sun and the spokes the rays. It was drawn by four black-palled horses on whose heads were heavy ostrich feather plumes and whose hoofs were painted black. There were many carriages in line and these had their lamps lighted and draped with black gauze. Soon appeared eight men carrying the coffin which was draped with a heavy cloth of gold pall. The men walked quickly, I thought, and without any show of reverence, shoving the casket somewhat roughly into the hearse and then taking their places on either side. The mourners were all men in what we call evening dress, and these filled the carriages. I saw no women in them, and whether they had another ceremony at the house or not I do not know, and I neglected to ask.

The other funeral I saw in the same church. This time, however, there was no heavy black pall

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as at the porch, nor were there carriages before the entrance; instead, the poor black coffin stood on the bare trestle in the aisle and on either hand burned tall candles guttering and waving in the dim light and a scant half dozen peasants in uncomfortable black clothes knelt on the small chairs in the aisle.

Leaning from my window, I idly watched the doings of the people in the Grand' Place, walking to and fro clad in their holiday best, with here and there bands of men and women beribboned and flower-decked, arm in arm, singing the folk-songs of the region, while before the cafés on the sidewalk in bright green and red chairs at tables filled with beer mugs sat other crowds, all happy and seemingly carefree. The big bell in the church tower overhead boomed forth the announcement of the beginning of the Kermes, and in the Bizarre Kiosk in the center of the square, a military band, and a good one too, played patriotic airs. All at once the sharp clear sound of a small bell was heard, and down the side of the square came two priests, all clad in white, one carrying a large brass lantern on which was a lighted candle, the other bore beneath his golden-embroidered robe the Holy Sacrament, and, as they advanced, men and women left the little tables and knelt down in the street, the band

in the Kiosk ceased and only the clear sound of the bell borne by the first priest was heard. The two passed on with slow steps, turned a corner and were gone; at once the people who had remained kneeling, arose, the band began again, and there was once more the sound of voices and laughter in the square.



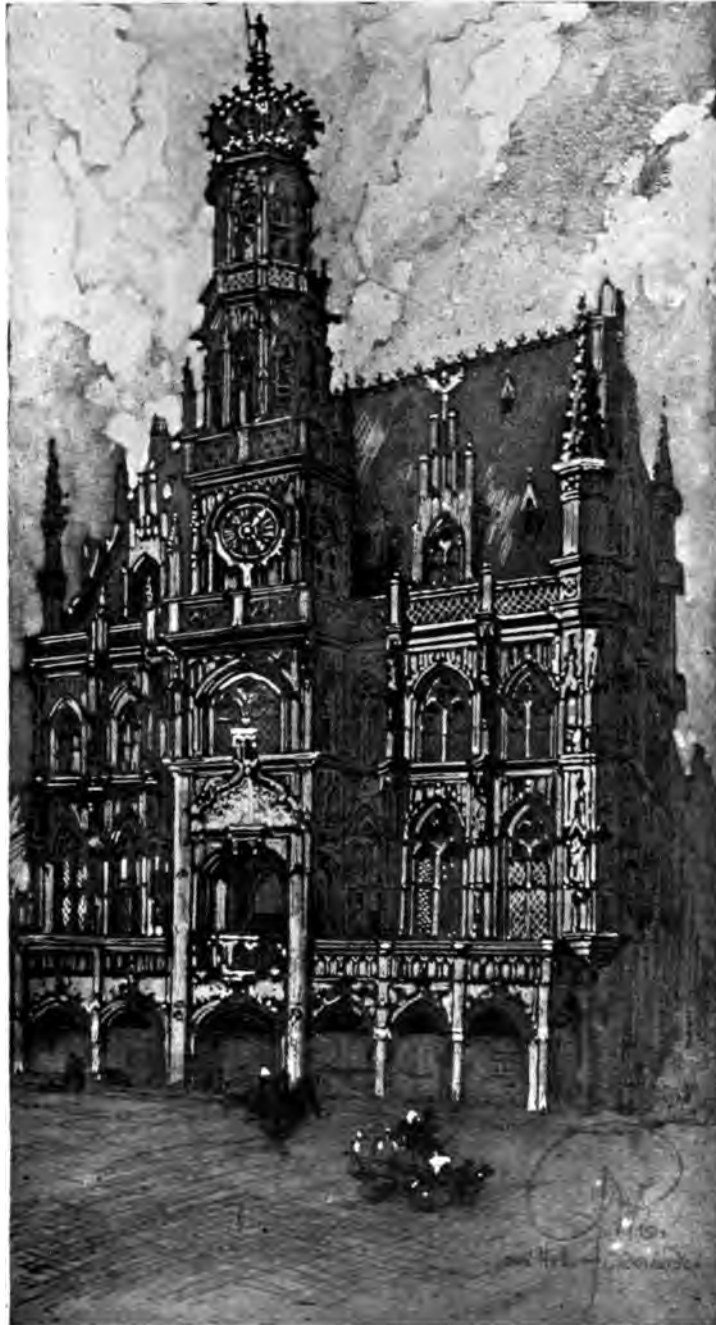
## *Oudenaarde*

**W**E were the only passengers left by the halting train from Ghent, and the red-capped station-master seemed surprised when I waited for him to unlock the wooden gate which barred the way to the town, and insisted upon taking both of our "rundreise" cards bearing our photographs and comparing them with the originals. The simulacra were sufficiently unlike us to arouse suspicion in the mind of even a more astute observer than this doubting Fleming, and I noted the reluctance with which he returned them to us, but I most politely lifted my American-made straw hat, and said to him in my own very best Flemish, "Alst U blieft." I named him also with his official title and asked his advice as to reaching the "Pomme d'Or," the ordinary of the town, adding that the day was "a rainy one, unluckily," and

that it was by no means as warm in Oudenaarde as in New York, all this in a more or less truculent spirit which is hardly pleasant to a free, breezy American, but is necessary here in the lowlands where the official dignity must be recognized. I saw his eye wander to the little red, white and blue ribbon which I always patriotically insert in my left-hand lapel, and then his hand went to his cap peak, "Mynheer is not an Englishman?" "No," I replied, "American," and I saw at once it was as if I had said, "Esquimo, or Thibetan," and so we left him quite mystified, I am sure, standing at the wooden gateway, key in hand, staring after us as we crossed the grass-grown square towards the towers which appeared above the low red-and-black tiled roofs of the town. A long winding well-paved street with the narrowest imaginable sidewalks of rough smooth-worn blocks of stone, between blank-looking, white-walled stuccoed houses with closed shuttered windows, and doorways flush with the pavement save for one clean white stone step, reminding one somehow of Philadelphia; here and there a lace curtain pushed back furtively as we passed, dodging the raindrops or the puddles of water in the sometimes deep depressions in the pavement, and generally walking in the street, which offers a better footway. An oc-

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casional shop window filled meagerly with a blue and white jar or two in which are clay pipes, and some signs on cards advertising chocolate, from which dangle currycombs and coils of new rope; then heavy doors with brass plates brightly polished and windows in which appear beautiful Chinese porcelain bowls, with tantalizing glimpses beyond of handsome furniture seen through lace medallioned curtains. Here the winding street turns and we get a view of the gray ornate side of the Hotel de Ville with its Gothic windows and row upon row of niches once held by the lords and ladies of Flanders, rising tier upon tier to the slender filigree-like tower with its gilded statue against the gray sky. Opposite is the Pomme d'Or, the Golden Apple of Oudenaarde, and Mynheer standing in the gateway to receive us. "Yes, he had a room for us, and if we would mount," bowing us through an archway of a passage which led to the courtyard, then into a sanded-floored, low room, smelling of tobacco, with well-filled pipe racks on the wall, a beer pump with a china handle, brass-tipped, ornamenting a counter at the back, and a line of small bare tables down each side, and here we were in one of the oldest of Flander's ancient towns, every foot of which was historic, and mayhap within the very walls which had sheltered the



THE TOWN HALL — OUDENAARDE



lovely Margaret of Parma, and her mother Johanna Van Der Gheenst, but we wanted luncheon, and Margaret might wait until we had been satisfied. Upstairs was a hall in which were long tables set with plates and napkins for a score or more, but Mynheer said these places were reserved for English "Dames," all students who had come for study with the professor, a great man too, who would arrive in the afternoon, and never had he seen them, or they him, thus were they here these "Dames." Curious, was it not, but he would make places for us below in his own salon where he would the omelette serve with the coffee for Mynheer and his lady (meaning ourselves), and here in a small rather dark and musty room we ate our luncheon underneath a vast chandelier hanging from the ceiling and ornamented with two long strips of well-patronized fly paper, which is here sold in spools. This was our headquarters for three delightful days of exploration in an almost unknown town filled with antiquity, and the rival of Bruges for interest. But I must say here that we never saw the score of "Dames," who studied with the professor, nor the latter either, for that matter, but we heard the sound of clattering plates in the long hall after we had retired, and in the morning, passing the door and peeping in, saw the disorder of the meal



of the night before. Who they were, and what they were studying I never found out, for either Mynheer did not know, or would not tell, which was singular, as he was far from uncommunicative. Sitting in the window of our room in the Pomme d'Or overlooking the Grand' Place, the wonderful townhall shining golden-orange in the light of the setting sun, I could but think of all that this half-forgotten town passed through in the days of Philip Van Artevelde, whose name is so linked with Oudenaarde. Froissart describing his power says: "All Flanders submitted to his government, and here he kept the state of a prince. He had his minstrels to play before him at his dinners, and was served on plate as if he had been Earl of Flanders; for he had possessed himself of all the plate, both gold and silver, that had belonged to the Earl (who had escaped from the battle of Bruges), as well as the jewels and furniture of his apartments found in his palace at Bruges. He kept a magnificent establishment of horses and was as grand in his house as the Earl of Flanders at 'Lille.' He had his officers throughout Flanders, such as bailiffs, governors, receivers, and sergeants, who every week brought considerable sums of money to Ghent, where also he kept his state, and was clothed in scarlet robes lined with furs, like the Duke of Brabant, or

Earl of Hainault. He had also his exchequer chamber, where the money was paid as to the Earl; and he gave dinners and suppers to the ladies and damsels of Ghent, as the Earl used to do; and like him was not sparing of his money where his pleasures were concerned. When he wrote he signed himself 'Philip Van Artevelde, Protector of Flanders.'" Oudenaarde was one of the two towns which held out against this war lord, and was so strongly fortified and held so many of the Earl's best soldiers under Daniel de Haluyn, that "Philip resolved on taking Oudenaarde and accordingly, after committing the charge of Bruges to Peter du Bois, he collected an army of one hundred thousand men and marched thither. He made heavy attacks on the place, but without any success, for neither he nor any of his captains had much knowledge of the art of taking walled cities." Indeed, Froissart laughed at him, and says that he knew better how to fish with rod and line in the Scheldt and Lys, than to attack a fortress. Finding that he could make no impression on the town, he surrounded it on land with his troops, and as the Ghent men had command of the river and had besides driven large stakes into its bed to prevent the approach of any vessels, he effectually prevented the people in the town from receiving supplies, hoping thus



to starve them into submission. But having plenty they held out stoutly.

The camp before Oudenaarde presented a curious scene, for the Ghent men carried on their business as if they had been at home. They had halls for cloth, furs and mercenaries. Every Saturday was the market, to which was brought from the neighboring villages, all sorts of groceries, fruit, butter, milk and cheese, poultry and other things. There were taverns as plenty as at Brussels, where Rhenish wines, and those of France, Malmsey and other foreign wines were sold cheap. Everyone might go thither, and pass and repass without fear; that is to say, people of Brabant, Hainault, Germany and Liege, but not those of France. While the Army lay before Oudenaarde, parties were continually going out, who burned and destroyed all the houses of the gentlemen of the country. Amongst these they plundered a beautiful place belonging to the Earl, called Marle, where he had been born; and as if they were desirous of doing everything to vex and annoy him, they broke the font in which he had been baptized, battered to pieces and carried away the silver cradle in which he had been nursed, and the tub he had been bathed in when an infant. These things especially provoked him. These plundering parties at length carried

things so far that in their expeditions they went far beyond their own bounds and burned several villages on French territory. The Earl of Flanders had before requested aid from France, but as he was disliked there his request had been ignored. But now the Duke of Burgundy, who was the uncle of the young King Charles VI of France, thought that there was a favorable opportunity to obtain assistance. The young king, who was only fourteen, was delighted at the idea of seeing something of war, and as French territory had been invaded and it was no longer a quarrel of the Earl of Flanders, he was not averse to march against Van Artevelde. So a large armament was quickly assembled, and marched towards Flanders. When Philip heard that the French had taken arms against him, he ordered all bridges over the river Lys to be broken down, and posted strong bodies of troops on the banks, hoping by this means to check the advance of the French, as that river formed the natural defense of Flanders on the French side, and is not fordable; and it now being the month of November, he concluded that they would not keep the field or attempt to take any other road, being disappointed in crossing the Lys, and that he need not fear any further disturbance until spring. But the French forced the passage of the river at

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Commines, desperately wounded Peter du Bois, who attempted to oppose them, dispersed his men and marched forward into the country, the towns everywhere opening their gates to them. Philip, encamped before Oudenaarde, was much dispirited at his intelligence, especially as he had not yet received any aid from England from whom he had begged assistance. Immediately he raised the siege, went to Ghent, collected as many men as he could muster, for the greater part of the army he had let to Oudenaarde had returned to their houses, and with them and all the others he could muster, amounting in all to about fifty thousand men, he advanced to meet the French who were posted at Roulers or Rosebeke, about a league and a half from Ypres, and numbered some sixty thousand, vastly superior in point of arms. They carried well-tempered lances and swords; whereas the armor of the Ghent men was very inferior; few having more than a coat of mail, a feeble protection against a well-tempered lance. Many had but haquetons, a padded dress usually worn under armor, and for offensive weapons they had only iron-headed pikes (Froissart calls them staves, pointed and bound with iron), and large knives hanging from the girdle. "They encamped opposite each other on the evening of Wednesday, November 26, 1382,

and waited for the morning to give battle. Philip assembled his captains at supper, and made a speech to encourage them. In the morning he led his men out before dawn and formed them in order of battle, in a position strongly defended by thickets, but he afterwards advanced further towards the French, and took his station on the top of a small hill at the front. Philip reminded his men that they had won the battle of Bruges by keeping close together, and he recommended them now to pursue the same course. He arrayed them in a close body, ordering them to lock arms, so that their ranks should not be broken, and in this wise they awaited the enemy. When the French were drawn out the Flemings began to move, and after firing several cannons and bombards, which put the French in some disorder, rushed down upon them and for a time drove them back. But the French, recovering, closed around the Flemings on the flanks with their sharp spears and swords and drove them one upon another in such wise that they could not use their weapons. Losing both strength and courage and falling upon one another, they were quickly slaughtered without hardly striking a blow. Van Artevelde was surrounded, wounded by spears, and beaten down with numbers of Ghent men who guarded him. The men-at-arms struck down

the Flemings on all sides with their well-sharpened battle axes, with which they cut through helmets and armor; others gave such blows with leaden maces that nothing could withstand them. Scarcely were the Flemings overthrown before the pillagers advanced, who, mixing with the men-at-arms, made use of the large knives they carried, and finished whoever fell into their hands, without more mercy than if they had been so many dogs. The clattering upon helmets and armor by the axes and maces was so loud that nothing else could be heard for the noise; it was as if all the blacksmith armorers of Paris had been working at their trade. There was a large mound of bodies of the slain Flemings, and never was there seen a battle at which so little blood was spilt. When those in the rear saw what had happened, they fled to Courtrai and other towns. After the battle there was a general inquiry as to the fate of Van Artevelde, and the young king having expressed a desire to see him dead or alive, a diligent search was made and his body found and brought to the royal pavilion. The king looked at him for some time; he was turned over to see if he had died of wounds, but none were found that could have caused his death. He had been squeezed in the crowd, and falling into a ditch, numbers of Ghent men fell upon him, and there

he died. The king had his body hanged upon a tree. A mean revenge and one unworthy of a king. Such was the end of Philip Van Artevelde, for six months master of all Flanders, who paid with his life for his ambition."

Across the level fields laid out in varied squares of rye or oats, and bounded by the gray green of cabbage fields, the sun shines brightly upon the gilded pinnacles of the beautiful tower of the town hall, rising from the low, red-tiled roofs of the small houses. Jupiter Pluvius loves Flanders and showers her with his favors for days at a time. The clouds hang low in the sky — so low that one might, it seems, reach them with a long pole. Oudenaarde is all that our fancy painted it, and the narrow grass-grown street leading from the station to the Grand' Place forms a fitting entrance to the quaint Flemish town. One can picture Margaret of Parma here with her gorgeous court, upholding the dignity of her father the Emperor Charles V. Sitting in the smoking-room of the Pomme d'Or, for there is nowhere else to go, save up to one's bedroom, we watched the peasants, wooden-shod and black-cloaked, hurrying across the square in the rain, and when the lightning blazed, and the thunder boomed overhead, madame and her children piously crossed themselves, and a pet mongrel

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dog whined under her chair. The dog was named Freddy, and madame was devoted to it. She petted it and the children while she entertained us with accounts of the dog's sagacity. So passed the afternoon, while the rain poured in torrents. We had dinner in a small musty room at the back of the house, a real Flemish dinner of twelve courses of very good food which we ate with gusto to madame's satisfaction, and then we sat in the smoking-room at the window from which we studied the exquisite detail of the townhall opposite in the late Gothic style. It is by the same hand as those of Louvain and Brussels though much smaller, and was erected in 1529. It has just been restored, madame says; below is a pointed hall supported by columns, and ornamented with a profusion of statues, and above are lovely pointed windows in the two stories. From the center rise a tall tower with an openwork gilded crown, capped with a gilded figure of a knight upholding a banner. Braving the rain, we scurried across the street to the door, unable longer to resist it, although A—— says that I wanted to get away from madame, the children and Freddy, the wonderful dog. Inside the door was an old soldier dozing on a bench, who produced keys when stimulated by a franc piece and showed us the Salle de Pas Perdus, which is alone

worth a journey, with its Gothic chimneypiece and its council chamber hung with faded old Spanish paintings of knights and noble ladies, and a doorway which is a masterpiece of wood carving, the work of Paul van Schelden. The room behind is the old cloth hall and in fairly good repair, save that a dilapidated stage disfigures it and the walls are wretchedly painted with a large badly-drawn letter "A," surmounted by a crown. When we emerged the rain had ceased and a few black-cloaked peasants were in the square, which is surrounded by small houses. In the west the sun shone brilliantly, and we picked our way over the wet stones to the tower of St. Walburga, which, with a large gilded clock-face, quite dominates the town. It is Romanesque with traces of Gothic style, built in the twelfth century, and in its massive, unfinished state is most impressive. Inside we found the tomb of Claude Talon, and an extremely rich polychromed Renaissance reredos. Walking around the town one is charmed by the silence and solitude, its small stream of sluggish water spanned here and there by an old stone bridge of arches, and its long lines of small yellow, pink, violet and gray walled houses with blackened rosy-tiled roofs all reflected in the placid river. Here and there the arms of a mill are lazily turning against the



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sky, and one hears the clack-clock of wooden shoes long before the wearer comes in sight. Oudenaarde played an important part in the history of Flanders; the Château of Bourgogne, or rather what now remains of the ancient edifice, is a picturesque memento of the terrible struggles of the burghers against their enemies of Ghent, who harassed and harried them whenever time hung heavily upon their hands, or they could think of nothing else to do. This bleak-looking castle was long the residence of Mary of Burgundy, and also of Charles V, who fled to the shelter of its massive walls during the siege of Tournai, in 1521, accompanied by the Regent of the Netherlands, Margaret of Austria. Oudenaarde is famous also as the birthplace of Margaret of Parma, as well as for Marlborough's victory over the French in 1708. But apart from its historic interest the town is most attractive to artists, who are beginning to come here from England in companies of ten or a dozen under instructors, and here they stop and make sketches during the day, and after dinner in the evening, one will be amused at the arguments and discussions concerning the various schools, and styles of painting which they each affect. A most pleasant and really charming spot, away from the toil and strife of the world — we left it all unwillingly.



THE CHURCH OF ST. WALBURGE — OUDEN-  
AARDE

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. . . A huge gray pile, spanned far above my head by graceful flying spandrels bearing traces of gilding and grand in its immensity. I had come upon it suddenly from a narrow winding street that here came to an end. Here huge bullocks blinked their bloodshot eyes, their mouths grinding cud peacefully and slobberingly. Here the peasants lingered in rough blouses, exclaiming and arguing vociferously over the latest price paid for potatoes. Here the women sat in a chance bar of sunshine that seemed beaten gold for very contrast to the deep shadows, knitting and gossiping. Overhead in the steeple two bells were chiming silvery notes in a sweet jangle where the pigeons wheeled and cooed in clouds against the opalescent sky. Now booms the bourdon in the heavy tower and I follow the women into the low Gothic door where the shadow lies deep. Off comes my cap gravely as a small beggar not unmindful of "p'tit sous" opens for me the heavy baize door with its fringe of tattered leather, with a dexterity born of long practice. I expected to see long mighty pillars row upon row; petrified stalks banded and blossoming; altars decked and blazing with candles; side chapels gilded; brilliant bedecked virgins crowned in virgin gold and jewels uncut; lace-hung canopies gleaming with pearls. I found a quiet solitary interior with a

deep purple and orange light fading out far up in the grooved roof where small deltaed windows shone dimly; faint tints of violet daylight lingering where some pane had fallen from a magnificent painted window of the ancient Netherland school. Below the candles shone in spots like yellow autumn leaves blown against the purple gloom, and at the altar three pendent bulbous lamps swung gently to and fro, making a visible halo against the painted saints in the background. Above the central altar, the light from the candles is not sufficient to clearly show the pitiful display of wax feet, arms, heads and hearts,—free, hopeful, nay, faithful offerings of the devout peasantry. Here half hidden in gentle obscurity are painted wooden saints and the little virgins, all in dirty, dusty muslin, crowns of real tinsel, and jewels of glass and spangles. The soft yellow glow from the candles fairly melts like liquid gold into the *lapis lazuli* shadows. The very darkness is luminous; it is as a midnight sea; is scented with the fumes of myrrh, and I know not what other sweet incenses. The priests are not yet here — for there still sounds, though afar off, that sweet jangle of two notes of the bells in the tower above, and there is for every beat a sort of hoarse dragging sound like laborious breathing,

as if the old bell ringer far above wrought the sounds in pain.

Now comes a red-gowned acolyte, young, nimble and fat as one of Rubens' cherubim, who darts hither and yon, lighting shrine and altar. See how the flame seems to leap from point to point, as the stars to drop from the young magician's wand, as kneeling solemnly before each he gives the glowing spark. Save for this small cherub, I seem to be alone in the huge church. Where are the peasants? Have they gone? No, there is one gray-patched old Fleming in a very trance before the holy-water basin. He has flung himself here at a distance from the altar which he does not deem himself fit to approach. His old gray head is bowed, the hair is thin at the top, and see how pathetically the violet and yellow light plays about him. How calm and fine even is the wrinkled face, ploughed by time. But there is a stir among the golden points at the altar and now comes forth the Becket-like figure of the priest in brave cloth of gold and crimson, trapped and be-decked. His person gleams forth startlingly; seems it as if some hidden light was projected upon him as he crosses himself rapidly upon the forehead and breast. And now beside me is an old peasant woman telling her beads. She does not

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heed my presence any more than if I was invisible. There is a sing-song from the priest and acolytes; the incense rises in pale blue clouds to the grooved roof where it loses its color; as if by magic the church has filled and now again the bells jangle far above, and the peasants rise, rattling their chairs. . . .

The spell is broken and I hasten out to the vestibule through the open door that admits not a particle of air. The dust, sparkling atoms of gold it seems, sifts in and lies upon the floor like a sheet of beaten gold. The incense is suffocating and I am glad to swing outward the heavy door and gain the square. From this buttress I can watch the peasants busily packing their yellow and pale green crockery in the heavy hampers; these they lift into the ox-carts. Soon the place before the church is deserted as one by one the carts lumber away bearing the noisy groups of men and women, the latter screaming and shouting perhaps for very delight in life. In an hour the town is silent and deserted but for the tinkling bell hourly sounding in the Beguinage, or perhaps the rumble of a heavy high-backed cart crossing the deserted square.

*Alost, Dendermonde,  
Commines and Bergues*

**A** LOST is one of the most ancient of Flemish towns, and at first view is somewhat disappointing, particularly if one has just come from a town like Oudenaarde or Courtrai. It is now a very small industrial town—let midway between Brussels and Ghent, and is not at all so sleepy as one would fancy, for it has quite a respectable population of which one may judge at noonday or at eventide when the workmen are homeward bound. The town at first sight seems to lack character, but really it is one of great interest if one but takes the time to consider and explore it. After viewing the old Hotel de Ville on the Grand' Place, which is unique not for its magnificence, for it is not so, nor for its flamboyant Gothic, like that of some of the other towns already mentioned, but because of the dignity of its façade and the quaintness of its details, as well as



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a certain picturesque ruggedness of the building, judged as a construction. The great square belfry with its towers dates from the fifteenth century and contains a fine carillon of bells arranged on a most quaintly designed platform. On the face of the tower are four niches, two at each side of the upper and center windows containing statues of the counts of Alost, from the year 1200, and it well carries its seven hundred years. "Ni 'Espoir, ni Craint" is an inscription on its walls, and doubtless in remembrance of the pestilence which depopulated the town, or perhaps it may refer to the sieges which it underwent time after time in those dark days of long ago. The belfry has also a second tower at its side, a beautifully proportioned structure of the fifteenth century in the late Gothic period, highly ornamented with pinnacles and statuary. Giving value to the square, a range of gabled houses of the sixteenth century are stretched along the sides of the place, with an array of arcades, façades, and somewhat fantastic roofs of brick of various shades, and stucco, mellowed by smoke and time.

In the center of the place is a statue, surrounded by dilapidated carriages and market wagons all jumbled together, of Thierry Moertens, a justly renowned master printer who was born here, and who established in the town one of the very first



THE TOWN HALL — ALOST



typographical establishments in Flanders, and whose books enjoyed great celebrity for their taste of design and quality of ink and paper. Moertens produced very notable books, some of which are in the Museum of Brussels. In 1360 a disastrous fire destroyed nearly all the houses, and during the religious wars the fury of the Spanish was vented upon Alost. It is recorded that a body of Spanish troops encamped in the vicinity marched into the Grand' Place, became mutinous because of a series of defeats, and through failure of the stores to reach them, were on the verge of starvation. Here in the Grand' Place they were harangued by Juan de Navarese, whom they chose as chief, and after sacking the unfortunate town of Alost, burning the houses and murdering the citizens, they marched away, bent upon other mischief of a like nature. History does not record what other mischief they did, but one may well believe that it was considerable. The Duke d'Alençon occupied the town and vicinity afterwards with his army, and others followed him, who treated the inhabitants in no more gentle manner. Then in 1485 and again in 1580 came the plague, which quite finished what was left of the people and sealed the fate of the town. In the Church of St. Martin is a large painting by Rubens depicting these dis-

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troubling episodes. Old St. Martin is at the end of a little street. The archives describe the old church as being of beautiful construction, but one can only find now some fragmentary evidence of its former character. Burned in 1605, it has preserved only its lateral entrance and several chapels of exquisite design, the whole now surmounted by a quaint arrangement of bulbous form in a tower rising from its center.

At the confluence of the rivers Dendre and the Scheldt is situated another most interesting small town, which was attacked frequently by ravaging armies, but history tells most amazingly how the watchful burghers opened the sluices of the canals at the approach of the enemy, Louis XIV, and transformed the country and the fields about into deep lakes, "so that," as the account has it, "the French had to raise the siege, for which, God be thanked." Amid green prairies and lines of tall trees, with here and there the red-tiled farmhouses peeping forth from the verdure, the small river Dendre takes its sinuous way, and encircles the bastions and walls of the smiling town; widening into a lake at the point, it bears upon its bosom myriads of large busy tugs. The scene is animated and most agreeable, with the sails, the towers, and the tall poplars all mirrored in the sluggish current. History records that Marl-

borough besieged and captured it in 1706 after a terrific bombardment lasting ten whole days. The little town is rather a busy one and we found it quite amusing, although I doubt if others would under other conditions. Two small inns in the Grand' Place vied with each other to entertain us. Both have resounding names, "Hotel Royal" and "Tête d'Or," and the amount of excitement which was engendered by our unannounced arrival was, while most flattering, rather embarrassing; but, as I say, we were amused, and we did not fare too badly. To whomsoever visits Dendermonde, I leave to guess at which inn we stopped. There is a quaint old church—Notre Dame—which can show two fine pictures by Van Dyck, ordinarily, but when we visited the town these two had been taken to Brussels to the Exposition. They are said to be notable examples and I made a memorandum in my note-book to be sure to see them, but in the excitement incidental to the fire there I quite forgot them. One is a Crucifixion (ca. 1630), the other an Adoration of the Shepherds (1635). The front is Romanesque and said to be twelfth century. The Hotel de Ville has a character all its own and is different in style from any other I have seen in Flanders. It has five gables and a tall campanile or tower with turrets, and is surmounted by a fantastic

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sort of squatty steeple. The four large gilded clock-faces are between the turrets. The gables, five in number, are of the stepped order, dating from the fourteenth century, and have beautifully-designed and wrought-iron finials or vanes. There are some statues in the niches and other decorations of excellent character, and on the whole the building is imposing for such a small town. There are some 10,000 inhabitants, but during the day one sees but few of them. There is a monument to Prudens van Duyse, the Flemish poet, who was born hereabouts, and one to a Jesuit missionary, de Smidt.

Not far from Courtrai and situated on the frontier of France is the little town of Commines. When our train stopped at the rather forlorn-looking station and we stood on the platform after it had passed on, we gazed at each other rather blankly; there was such a cheerless dilapidated air over it all that I regretted having alighted. In the dirty street opposite the station was gathered an array of wagons and some hundred or so of large Flemish horses, about which were gathered knots of farmers and rowdy-looking men with red and yellow handkerchiefs tied about their necks; but we braved it all, and, leaving our impedimenta in the care of an ancient "Commissionaire," wended our way down the narrow street, with

some difficulty avoiding being stepped on by the nervous horses. At some distance from the station we found the Beffroi on the Grand' Place, of course. Every town in Flanders has its Grand' Place, but this is one of the most curious, the most original of the municipal buildings in the whole of Flanders, and we congratulated ourselves on our perseverance. The Beffroi is an immense square tower, looking very top-heavy because of the large turrets at each angle and curious construction containing the bells, which is topped by a most extravagant cap, out of which rises an almost impossible and bulbous — I hardly know how to name it, but my drawing will show it better than any description I could write of it. All these Flemish towns guard and venerate their communal donjons, which may be called symbolic of their liberties, and forming a collection of colossal structures like of which is unknown elsewhere. Commines is a small Franco-Flemish village on the banks of the Lys, separated in two parts by the river, and given up to the buying and selling of horses and cattle. It is famous as the birthplace of Phillipe de Commines, who was born at the Château although some historians aver that he was born at Argenton en Portou. Apart from the Beffroi, there is nothing to see in Commines, and I remember well the dreadful luncheon



we had at the inn opposite the station, in the *salle a manger*, smelling of stale beer — but these are the thorns in the pillow of the explorer, and perhaps should not be recorded.

Bergues is better by far than Commines, a small village framed in trees of picturesque aspect, and belted by ancient ramparts, footed in the deep waters of the moat or canal, whichever it is, with smiling green fields all about and a cheerful populace who were polite to us when the occasion offered. The town is quite ignored by the guide-books, yet it has one of the most remarkable belfries in the whole country, which can be seen over the housetops for a long distance, and the silvery sound of its bells haunted us for days afterwards. The streets are winding and silent, the houses small and often mean-looking, but the tower of the belfry compensates for all. As usual there is a Grand' Place and the tower rises at one side of this from some mean-looking buildings without style or character, but they cannot deduct from the grandeur of the magnificent belfry (or Beffroi), a high and really superb tower, completely covered from base to top with large ogival arcatures in eight zones or ranks. Four immense turrets spring from its corners and these in turn are covered with arcatures of the same character, flanking the large gilded clock-



THE BELFRY AT COMMINES

main, one heavy and square and supported by enormous buttresses of time-stained brick, the remains of the church tower; the other, octangle in four distinguishing stages, terminating in a high slender steeple. Neither of these fine old towers seems to be cared for, and it is a wonder that they have not fallen long since. One can see them even from the sea coast, leagues away, and they may perhaps serve as "day marks" for the fishermen and vessels passing to and from Dunkerque. I have tried to find an entrance to the first tower, but the doorway is blocked up with the remains of fallen masonry and choked with weeds. Two large brown rats darted hither and thither through hidden holes in the stones, and a boy wearing large "Klompen" (wooden shoes), who was watching us suspiciously at some distance, began to shout out something in Flemish, and soon a dozen or more old men, women and children came running, pausing at a distance of three or four yards, where they stood regarding us suspiciously. One of the old men who carried a heavy stick beat it suggestively on the ground. I walked boldly up to the crowd which stood awaiting me, all save the boy who had called out; he took to his heels. I addressed them courteously in a few words of Flemish, said that we were strangers, Americans, and "hoped that we had done no wrong in walk-

ing about the old tower." At this the old fellow with the stick took off his cap and bowed to us, saying, "Alst u blieft, Mynheer en Juffrow"; then turning to the others he delivered a harangue accompanied with most extravagant gesticulations, and ended by waving them all away with his stick. Then he turned to us again and most respectfully asked our pardon for the discourtesy of the people, explaining that they, of course, did not know who we were, that, if I pleased would we kindly not complain of them to "Mynheer t' Bourgomeester." Without understanding at all what he was driving at, I with a great show of dignity magnanimously promised not to complain of them, and so the old fellow withdrew with many bows and much thanks. Then we betook ourselves to the small railway station, where, after what seemed an interminable period of waiting, we at length got a slow train which brought us to Ypres. I have often wondered what it all meant, but so many strange things have happened to us in our wanderings that I have become accustomed to the unusual and "count that day lost whose low descending sun" gives us no adventures or happenings.

There is a simple dignity about the streets in even the smaller towns of Flanders that must

strike the traveler in contrast to our own towns in America. Here one can imagine himself back in the past without disillusionment, wandering along a picturesque canal bordered by tall poplars and perchance the remains of old walls dating from the Roman occupation. One may stop to rest at a wayside establishment and find the array of bottles and glasses on the leaden counter, all shining in the morning sun, of interest and amusing, or stop before the quaint, niched figure of the Virgin in the wall of a house before which hangs a lantern, the center of the village piety. The everyday life on every hand is rendered poetic and artistic by the evident touch of Time's qualifying fingers. Old walls, old gables, are everywhere. Sometimes, of course, one will come upon an obtrusive modern construction, but this only serves to throw into sharper contrast and relief the charming old relics that speak so falteringly of earlier and ruder times. In Flanders the modern is to be regarded as an interloper, and one's eyes rest with a certain sense of fitness upon the girls in the out-of-the-way spots, clad in blue fustian short skirts, their neat hair half hidden by the flaps of the ancient Flemish lace cap, which, alas, is fast disappearing. These girls one meets on lonely country roads, sitting among the brass milk cans in high-bodied green wagons drawn by fierce

black dogs, or some shy family group who think themselves, rather than their quaint surroundings, to be the object of one's attention. The country, I may add, is best seen in early summer.

The breeding of the large-bodied, thick-legged, heavily-built horse is a most important industry in Flanders and in some of the smaller towns little, if any other, occupation engages the attention of the inhabitants. The Flemish horse enjoys a world-wide reputation as a beast of heavy burden, and I have been informed that this is due to three factors: the soil, the climate, and the skill of the breeders. The soil is humid, and produces a vegetation that is rich and abundant and suited to the requirements of the horse. The heavy soil necessitates great labor, three horses being required to draw a plow. At Alost, in 1770, the Government established a breeding-shed with Arab and Neapolitan stock, but the attempt to better the breed was abortive and finally abolished. My informant stated that after the Franco-Prussian War, Germany became the chief buyer, replacing France, and England likewise began to buy in the markets. Encouraged by this support, the native breeders sought to better results, and soon began to coöperate, thus producing the

Brabantine, the Ardennes, and finally the breed known now as the Flemish, all with the strain of the Oriental Cross. Recognizing certain blemishes in the types, the breeders established at Liege and Ghent in 1885 very important stables devoted to the improvement of the horse, and these finally merged some twenty-five years ago in the present "Society of the Belgian Draught Horse," with headquarters at Brussels, with a membership of twelve hundred, accomplishing the expected result by the issuing of "Stud-books," insuring purity of stock, and holding each year, in the month of June, a great exposition, at which the animals are exhibited, and prizes representing thirty thousand francs (\$6,000) are awarded. My informant states that in 1907 the Administration of the Stud-book delivered 1,150 pedigrees of stock, sold abroad. Of this number 450 stallions and 150 mares were shipped to the United States, and he gave me further some facts of horse breeding which seemed to him to be of great importance; for instance, he said that in round figures there are born annually 40,000 foals, but apart from those chosen for breeding purposes the farmer does not usually keep foals until they are full grown. They are sold in the autumn following their birth to other districts, where they are broken in to work from the age of eighteen months to



THE TOWER OF ST. WINOC — BERGUES





two years. Births usually take place in the spring when agricultural labor is well advanced, in order that the mares and foals may be turned out to pasture. He tells me that the prices average: for foals from eighteen months to two years, \$120 to \$200; horses of three years, \$250 to \$300; and four-year-olds fetch much more. The exportation trade is very large, having risen to upwards of \$3,800,000.

In Dendermonde the legend of the Four Sons of Aymon is endeared to the people, and they never tire of telling the story in song as well as in prose. Indeed, this legend is perhaps the best preserved of all throughout Flanders. It dates from the time of Charlemagne, the chief of the great leaders of Western Europe, whose difficulty in governing and keeping in subjection and order his warlike and turbulent underlords and vassals is a matter of history known to almost every school-boy.

Among these vassal lordlings, whose continued raids and grinding exactions caused him most anxious moments, was a certain duke (Herzog) named Aymon, who had four sons named Renault, Allard, Guichard and Ricard, all of most enormous stature and prodigious strength,—of these Renault was the tallest, the strongest, the most agile and the most cunning. In height he

78 *SOME OLD FLEMISH TOWNS*

measured what would correspond to sixteen feet, and he "could span a man's waist with his hand, and lifting him in the air, squeeze him to death." This was one of his favorite tricks with the enemy in battle.

Aymon had a brother named Buves, who dwelt in Aigremont, which is near Huy, and one may still see there the castle of Aymon, who was also called the Wild Boar of the Ardennes.

This brother Buves, in a fit of anger against Charlemagne for some fancied slight, sent an insulting message to the latter, refusing his command to accompany him on his expedition against the Saracens, which so exasperated him that he sent one of his sons to remonstrate with and if need be, to threaten him with his vengeance in case he persisted in refusing. Buves was ready for him, and, without waiting to receive his message, he met his messenger half way and promptly murdered him. Then Charlemagne in a fury sent a large and powerful body of men to punish Buves, who was killed in the battle which took place at Aigremont. Thereupon the four sons of Aymon met and over their swords swore vengeance against Charlemagne and betook themselves to the fortress of the Ardennes, in which they built for themselves the great castle of Monfort which is said to have been even stronger than that called

Aigremont. On the banks of the river Othe may still be seen the great gray bulk of its ruins. About this stronghold they constructed high walls, and from there they sent out a challenge defying the great emperor. Now each of the four sons had his own fashion of fighting. Renault fought best on horseback, and to him Mauqis, son of Buves, brought a great horse named Bayard ("Beiaard" in Flemish), of magic origin, possessed of demoniac powers, among which was the ability to run like the wind and never grow weary. Here in this stronghold the four sons of Aymon dwelt, making occasional sallies against the vassals of Charlemagne, until at length the emperor gathered a mighty force of soldiers and horse and engines and scaling ladders, and surrounding the stronghold at length succeeded in capturing it. Tradition says that among Charlemagne's retinue was Aymon himself and intimates that it was by the father's treachery that the four mighty sons were almost captured; but at any rate the great castle of Monfort was reduced to ashes and ruin, and only the fact of Renault's taking the other brothers on the back of the wondrous horse Bayard, saved them all from the emperor's fury. So they escaped into Gascony, where they independently attacked the Saracens and driving them forth, extended their swords to the King of Gas-

cony, Yon, who treacherously delivered them in chains over to Charlemagne. These chains they broke and threw in the emperor's face, fighting their way to freedom with their bare hands. History hereafter is silent as to their end. Of Renault it is only known that he became a friar at Cologne, where his skill and strength were utilized by authorities in building the walls, and that one day while at work some masons whom he had offended crept up behind him and pushed him off a great height into the river Rhine, and thus he was drowned. Years afterward the Church canonized him, and in Westphalia at Dortmund may be seen a monument erected in his memory, extolling his powers, his deeds and his strength. As to the great and magical horse Bayard, the chronicle says that it was captured finally by Charlemagne's soldiers and brought before him. He deliberated at what he should do with it, since it refused to be ridden. Finally he ordered that the largest millstone in the region should be made fast to its neck by heavy chains and that it should then be cast into the river Meuse. Bayard contemptuously shook off the heavy stone and with steam pouring from his nostrils gave three neighs of derision and triumph and climbing the opposite bank vanished into the gloom of the forest where none dared to follow. Of the immortality of this great horse history is



THE BELFRY AT BERGUES



emphatic and gravely states that, for all that is known to the contrary, he may still be at large in Ardennes but that "no man has since beheld him," and now yearly on the Grand' Place at Dendermonde there is a great festival and procession in his honor, depicting the chief incidents of his life and mighty deeds, while at Dinant on the river Meuse, the scene of some of his mightiest deeds, may still be seen the great rock Bayard, standing more than forty yards high and separated from the face of the mountain by a roadway cut by Louis XVI, who cared little for legends. From the summit of this great needle of rock sprang the horse Bayard, flying before the forces of Charlemagne, with the four brothers on his back, and, so tradition says, "leaped down the river disappearing in the woods on the further bank."

This is the song of "Bayard," sung by the peasants of the region.



# 'T ROS BEIAARD.

(Dendermonde.)

Musical notation for the first system, consisting of a treble and bass staff. The treble staff begins with a trill (tr) marking over a note. The bass staff provides a harmonic accompaniment.

Musical notation for the second system, including lyrics and performance instructions. The treble staff has the lyrics: "tjdmaat" above it, and "'T Ros Bei - aard maakt zijn" below it. The bass staff has the instruction "Vertragend" below it, and "f. tjdmaat" below it. A trill (tr) marking is present in the treble staff.

Musical notation for the third system, including lyrics. The treble staff has the lyrics: "ron - de In de Stad van Den - der - mon - de; Die van". The bass staff provides a harmonic accompaniment.

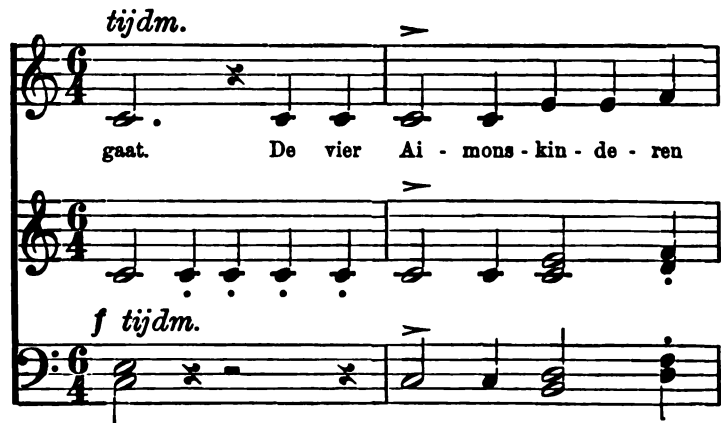
'T ROS BEIAARD

*vertr. ....*



Alst die zijn Zoo Kwaad, Om - dat hier 't Ros Bei-aard.

*tijdm.*



gaat. De vier Ai - mons - kin - de - ren

*f tijdm.*



jent..... Met blan-ken zwaarde in d' hand.....

## *Courtrai*

*I*T is to this pretty town, so smiling in the brightness, even gayety, of its market-place that one's memory returns; its wide thoroughfares and boulevards planted with chestnut and linden trees; its spacious squares with gardens in bloom adding greatly to the beauty of the town, which is famed for the great Battle of the Spurs, fought before the walls in 1302 by a handful of valiant burghers against the flower of French knighthood on the plains of Groven-nighe. History says that "Seven hundred golden spurs were picked up afterwards on the field and hung in the Cathedral." But these have long since disappeared and only some gilded wooden ones are now shown to remind one of the battle. Flowing through the town is the pretty river Lys, which winds through green meadows around the remains of the old walls, and in its

waters is steeped the flax which furnishes the inhabitants with their principal occupation. Next to Bruges the town has a fair claim to its rank in importance, with a little more than 35,000 inhabitants to the 40,000 of Bruges; it unhappily presents little of its former ancient appearance. Its Grand' Place, to be sure, is sufficiently mediæval to satisfy one, for the beflowered belfry, which stands alone decked with ivy and surrounded on market days with the booths of the weekly fair, is unique. Its hanging bells, and its gilded clock-face and escutcheons shining in the sunlight are all delightful, and the people of the town are justly proud of it, and of their valiant ancestors who did so much for liberty on that summer morning on the plains outside. They are proud, too, of their present prosperity, and their linen is famous far and wide. Then, too, the population has doubled in less than fifty years. They have restored the fine church of Notre Dame, commenced by Baldwin in 1199, and the beautiful Counts' Chapel presents a creditable appearance in its restoration with the figures of the counts and countesses of Flanders adorning it. The town preserves in the midst of its modern bustle and activity one of the few remaining Beguinages. That of Bruges is larger in area as is also that of Ghent, but this "Little town inside a town" is

most quaint and delightful in its quietude, unless where one might miss it, passing its portal without guessing what lies behind that heavy black door in the wall. Lying almost under the heavy tower of Saint Martins, this tiny retreat is "Noye de Sileuce." Tradition assigns its inauguration to the year 1238, when Jeanne de Constantinople prepared it as a refuge for the sisters or daughters of Saint Begga, and to her they have erected a statue in the tiny moss-grown square surrounded by the white-washed walls of the small red-tiled houses where dwell the peaceful black-cloaked Beguines. Here in 1631 one hundred and forty pious ladies consecrated their lives to the service of God, and, as to-day, carried on lace-making, embroidery, ministrations to the poor and sick, and the instruction of children. To-day forty odd houses shelter but a dozen or so of the placid-faced, white-coiffed Beguines whom one encounters occasionally in the streets of the town. The small houses date from the seventeenth century; each house has a small courtyard behind a brick wall. In the midst of these houses and rising above the low gables is a lofty red-brick building flanked by a tower, which serves as a market for the sale of the lace and linen which they make. In 1635 Maximilian Villain, Bishop of Tournai, presented the community with a fine



BEGUINES AT WORK

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“Ecce Homo,” which adorns the chapel at its entrance. An air of peace and calm is over all in this quaint enclosure where the noise of the street is muffled and only the sound of the chimes in the tower above is heard. But Courtrai is fast becoming one of the important manufacturing towns of Flanders, because of the properties of the river Lys which flows through it in a sinuous course dividing the fair green meadows above and below which encircle the town. Science has demonstrated the fact that the water contains most valuable properties for the “retting” of flax, the manufacture of which has constituted its wealth for several centuries, and a great proportion of which is exported to Great Britain, principally to Belfast, Ireland, where it is manufactured into “Irish linen.” Facing the railway station is a fine statue of Jean Palfyn by the sculptor Thomas Vincotte. Palfyn, I found after some trouble, was the inventor of the forceps, but the townspeople do not seem to be interested in either his personality or his invention. Your Fleming of these modern days is intensely practical, and is indifferent to events and personages which have no bearing upon his daily pursuits or pleasures. He can tell you the name of the local bandmaster or bearer, or the date of the Battle of the Spurs, but of anything of events between, affects a mild sur-



prise. When you question him, up go his hands and his eyebrows and he will shrug you into silence. Exploring the town one comes upon the Grandes Halles, dating from the middle of the sixteenth century, some ninety yards long by about eighteen in width, and formerly used by the cloth guild. It has been restored with good judgment to its original form. Farther on in the same street is the new post-office recently constructed in the same style, and then one comes upon the tower of the Petites Halles, or Beffroi, before described, embowered in flowers, and which survived the wars of mediæval times. Upon examining it more closely I found an inscription upon it which I missed before, "Antiquissima Opidi Cortraceni Supersteti;" the *hotel de ville* opposite was built in 1526 in the Gothic style and is a two-storied, long building with a high-pitched roof from which rises a tall slender spire, and its hall is lighted by twelve pointed latch windows. Inside are two very famous old chimneypieces, masterworks of carving, which well repay one for tarrying in this little town. On the walls are really remarkable frescoes representing episodes in the history of Courtrai, the work of Gaffeus and Swerts, both masterworkers. Dominating the market square is the tower of St. Martins with a most interesting porch dating from 1439.

Standing in the square one sees it framed between quaint roofed houses all in a purple shadow, so narrow is the short street leading to it. As I stood with my back against a wall making my sketch, I saw over the heads of the children who gathered to watch "Mynheer t' schilderer," for that is how they labeled me, a procession of priests with banners emerge in a blaze of color from the portal, while from the vast tower above rang peal upon peal of the bells. Further on is the very ancient church of Notre Dame, mentioned on another page, as being built by Bandonin of Constantinople (Baldwin) on his departure for the Crusade. In one of the chapels are the frescoes of the Counts and Countesses of Flanders. Here one will find the famous painting of Van Dyck, representing the "Erection of the Cross," which was stolen last year, and later on recovered in a field by the roadside, the thief having thrown it away in alarm at the hue and cry over its disappearance. Happily it was not injured in the least, although it had lain in the field, soaked by the rain and dried by the sun, for some months. The main altar is after the plans of Marcel Leftvre (eighteenth century), the celebrated goldsmith of Tourri, but it does not move me to enthusiasm,—rather leaves me cold, although the workmanship is fine. Had I not just come down from St. Jacques at Antwerp perhaps I

might have considered it more remarkable. That most scholarly and powerful Flemish poet, Guido Gezelle, who died in 1899, is honored here by a bust, in acknowledgment of his work in the promotion of the Flemish language and literature. On the river Lys are two imposing stone towers, the celebrated Tours de Broel dating from the fourteenth century; on either bank they are joined by a three-arched bridge, and one of them is quite embowered in fine old trees. Reflected on the sluggish stream they are quite satisfying to the lover of the picturesque, and here one may linger pleasantly in a small estaminet of clean interior, listening to the garrulous old Fleming who sits at the door under the linnet's cage, with a cushion on her lap; over the lace pattern her busy, gnarled old fingers play the rattling bobbins, after a meal of beer and cheese and black bread. I sallied out to explore the towers of the bridge; over the small low doorway of one is a gilded crucifix imbedded in a window, and here I found an old fellow who, after some negotiations, involving the transfer of some small coinage, admitted me; there is nothing much to see in the towers but I had nothing else to do. The one on the south side of the Lys is called the Speytorre; and forms part of the ancient "enciente" of the first château and was built in the twelfth century by Philippe of Alsace, and



THE BROEL TOWER AND BRIDGE — COURTRAI



was considered, with the château of Lille, to be one of the most formidable in all Flanders. In 1382 it was pillaged and half destroyed by the Breton soldiers of Charles VI. The walls at the base are more than two and a half yards thick, and there are some horrible dungeons below with rings in the walls and flooring where hopeless wretches were chained amid the dripping ooze of the river, without air or light. The old fellow who showed them, candle in hand, I fancied would have liked nothing better than to have robbed and pushed me into the reeking blackness were he assured of safety against discovery. He thought I was an Englishman, and when he found afterwards that I was from America, became really civil and took me over to the other tower across the river. This is called the "Inghelbrugtorre," and was constructed at the same time as the bridge at the left, during the years 1411-1413. The masonry resembles that of the "Speytorre," and is pierced below its first stage not only for archers but for cannon and the casting of molten pitch upon the heads of the besiegers, a pleasant fashion of the art of warfare in the Middle Ages. Both of the wonderful old towers were well restored by the authorities a short time ago.

The river Lys is celebrated here in song and poem by the people. They call it "The Golden


River," and never tire of sounding its praise to whomsoever will lend a willing ear, and I was handed a poem by a local bard, one Adolphe Verriest, a barrister or advocate, which is beloved by the townspeople. It is called "Het Leielied" (The Song of the Lys), and the first verse is as follows:

" Zoet is wel der Vog'len fale,  
 Zoet der lente Zonnestralen,  
 Zoet de Zoele Zomernacht,  
 Zoet de reine Kinderbach,—  
 't lieve Vlaamische Leielied,  
     als de meie,  
     langs de Leie,  
     weer daet groisien,  
     bloeien, broien.

bloemen, vruchten, boomen, gras en riet."

And he further indulges his fancy in prose description. "La Lys flows over the level fields of our beautiful country, its fecund waters reflecting the blue of the heavens and the clear verdure of our wondrous Flemish landscape. Active and diligent servant, it seems to work ever for our advantage, multiplying in its charming sinuosities its power for contributing to our prosperity, accomplishing our tasks, and granting our needs, it gives to our lives ammunition and power. The noise of busy mills and the movement of

bodies of workmen on its banks is sweet music in our ears, in tune to the rippling of its waters. A silver ribbon starred with the blue corn flower — the supple textile baptized in its soft waters is transformed by the hand of man into cloudy lace, into snowy-white linen — into fabrics of filmy lightness for my lady's wear — La Lys, name significant and fraught with poetry for us — giving life to the germ of the flax which it conserves through all its life better than any art of the chemist in the secret chambers of his laboratory. Thanks to this gracious river, our lovely town excels in napery and is known throughout the world. In harvest time the banks of the Lys are thronged with movement, the harvesters in quaint costumes, their bodies moving rhythmically to the words of the songs they sing, swing the heavy bundles of flax from the banks to the level platforms, where it is allowed to sleep in the water, and later the heavy wagons are loaded to the cadence of other songs appropriate to the work. Large, picturesque, colored windmills wave their brown velvety-hued sails against the piled-up masses of cloud, and over all is intense color, life and movement. The river plays then a most important part in the life of the Flemish plains about Courtrai, giving their daily bread to the peasants and lending poetry to their existence. So, O Lys,





our beautiful benefactor, we love you." From time to time various objects testifying to the great antiquity of the town have been exhumed. In revealing the fortifications workmen have come upon the débris of tiles, amphora, and pieces of Trojan money, medals of Marcus Aurelius and Antony the Pius, proving the existence of Roman occupation. The origin of Courtrai is lost in the night of antiquity. In the document of an administration order preserved in the archives, dating from the fifth century, "The Notitia dignitatum (imperii) Romani" mentions among the forty-eight corps of troops stationed during this epoch in Gaul, the "Cortoriaceuces," which composed the twenty-second legion, and was placed under the command of the prefect of cavalry. This brief mention is the most anciently-written document relating to Courtrai. The history of the town is that of all those bordering on the frontier, and from the very beginning to the end of the Dutch régime, it knew and suffered siege after siege, horror after horror, and witnessed hordes of all the soldiers of Europe filing through its crooked streets, their banners bathed in the blood of the hopeless Flemings.<sup>1</sup>

The language spoken in Courtrai is a dialect of

<sup>1</sup> See *Atlas des Villes de la Belgique au XVI siècle*, Bruxelles, (Jacques De Venter, Fascicule Courtrai, 1886).

West Flanders, strongly impregnated by its proximity to France, and for this reason the larger part of the populace is bi-lingual. This fact makes it easy for the tourists to get along comfortably in the neighborhood. The people are kindly disposed but most suspicious of the stranger and, until one proves himself and his intentions, are apt to repel any advances. The inn, facing the Beffroi, is most comfortable, the rooms airy and clean and the food good and plentiful. We found it most difficult to tear ourselves away from the town, A—— declaring that it was the quaintest spot she had seen in Flanders. Here then we lingered day after day, the weather being beautiful and each day filled with delightful walks and unexpected discoveries of new spots of interest. I find in my note-book this entry: "The city is said to derive its name from the famous elms (Yper boomen), which grow in this part of Flanders in great profusion, and the population in 1247 exceeded 200,000, but when the city surrendered to the Spanish in 1584 only 5,000 inhabitants remained, and of these nearly one-half were put to death."

Somehow we cannot resist the impulse to explore for antiques, even though we know we cannot carry them, traveling as we are, "en garcon," and that we must endure the pangs of leaving pre-

scious objects found on these happy pilgrimages. To-day we "discovered" a lovely old copper pot with a pierced rim of most unique workmanship, all fastened with huge brass nails and having a ponderous bail of brass, hanging over the fire in a peasant's house in a small back street near the Beguinage. Passing we saw a bent old dame sitting in the window over a lace cushion, her thin hands flying over the pattern, placing and replacing the polished bobbins. She glanced at us through the small panes as our shadows obscured the none-too-clear light, and as she smiled up at us, we made bold to enter the small, dark doorway.

It began to rain, softly at first, then with increasing heaviness, and mixed with hailstones which struck rattling against the red-tiled roof of the small houses, and the deep windows with their small, grimy panes. A—— and I stepped into the open doorway, and in the gloom watched the large hailstones patter on the rough, uneven stones of the street.

A door opened, and the old bent dame appeared, older even and more bent than she appeared in the window. She greeted us civilly, inviting us to enter, which was just what we wished. The room was very small, with a low ceiling crossed by heavy, whitewashed beams, and contained a table, two or three chairs, a sort of cupboard with a half-



THE BELFRY AND CATHEDRAL — COURTRAI

her son? — she asked piteously, letting the bobbins drop in her anxiety. Never had she had a word from him since he went away, and ah! it seemed so long ago, and he never said good-by to her either, think of that! but he had sent her a message and good-by by a neighbor.

He, the son, was a flax spinner, a good workman, too, a good boy; his name was Charles (she pronounced it *Sharl*).

Would mynheer and madame please themselves with a cup of tea? No? Then she thanked mynheer and madame for so kindly talking with her.

She got up unsteadily and opened the door for us. The rain had ceased, overhead the sky was blue, and on the wet, red-tiled roofs the pigeons cooed and strutted, cooing loudly.

A—— left a two-franc piece on the table where the old woman could not fail to see it, and we went towards the hotel, through the wet, crowded streets. We told the landlady at the inn of our experience, and she who knew the old woman well seemed somewhat disturbed when we mentioned the son as having gone to America, and was thereafter noncommittal. The next afternoon, when A—— and I returned to the inn from an exploration, the landlady informed us with some emotion that the old dame had passed away peacefully during the night, and then she told us a pathetic tale.

open door, and its disordered contents in full view; beside it a small sheet-iron stove, bound rather prettily with brass bands, and standing absurdly high on thin legs, with a huge, flat, horizontal stove-pipe entering the wall at right angles behind it, embellished with various pots and pans. The floor was of flat, red-brick, broad tiles and was swept quite clean. In the window was a chair, before which stood a sort of stand upon which was the large lace pillow with many bobbins depending from it behind which the old dame seated herself on a rush-bottomed chair, and taking up the bobbins began to trace the pattern on its blue background around the pins. She talked as she worked, her back bent pathetically over the lace. Widowed she was with one son, no, alas! he was not with her — he went away last year to America, but he would come back — he would come back. Her old palsied head nodded pathetically in confirmation of her words. “Yes, alas! her eyes were bad, very bad, and she could hardly see the pattern sometimes now, and then she could only make the coarser lace, but, in her youth, *then* she could and did make the very finest sort, she had a diploma for her lace,” proudly pointing to where it hung on the wall flanked by a small black crucifix and a portrait of the Queen.

But did mynheer know by chance anything of

## *Ypres*

*Y*PRES?—"Where is that?" I am constantly asked when I mention this most remarkable town, and the names Dixmude, Courtrai, Tournai, Alost, Hal and Furnes are received with a wondering stare of inquiry. I feel then something like a discoverer, and if the reader is curious and will accompany me through these pages, I will do my best to show him some of the quaintness and the wonders of this land of the Flemings. No part of Europe is more deficient in what is known as "scenery" than this region, a wide, flat, well-watered and populous plain, lying between the frontiers of France and Holland, with a coast line on the North Sea of about fifty miles, and those who explore it will be content to remain in the remarkable towns which I have enumerated above and which are so mediæval in their sleepy existence. Nature, indeed, has done



THE VILLAGE CARPENTER SHOP



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THE VILLAGE CARPENTER SHOP

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very little for Flanders except to cover the tottering walls and battlements with ivy and moss, and sow green blades of grass in the silent market-places and winding streets.

The interest and quality, then, of these little-known towns is chiefly architectural and historical, but lest the reader should think that I am about to load these pages with masses of dry facts and figures, I hasten to assure him that I have little liking for such details, that my sketches are done in a very free-hand style, and at best are only slight impressions done at the moment; that some of the best of these were gathered between the railway stations and the small hotel to which we often wended our way on foot, for the reason that many of the towns were lacking in conveyances, and the reader may imagine us dodging the raindrops, for it raineth much and often in Flanders, and following after a blue-bloused peasant, wooden-shod, bearing our impedimenta in the direction of the inn which is generally at some distance from the railway. The people in the streets regard us curiously, for the tourist is seldom met with here; faces appear at windows as we pass, children solemnly stare at us, and fall in behind us, so that when the inn is reached we are heading a procession of quite respectable size. The inns are in the main comfortable, the beds good, and what is bet-



ter, quite clean, and the food while somewhat strange is well cooked, but after one has eaten there is nowhere to sit save in the estaminet, or drinking-room, which reeks of tobacco and the odor of beer. The floor is sanded, there are many small tables and chairs and one at one end is a sort of counter, bottle-laden, at which presides the buxom *Vrouwe* of *Mynheer*, the proprietor. Dinner is served at noon, supper at seven-thirty, and then — well then, one is supposed to go to bed — there is nothing else to do, and really after the day is spent in wandering about the quaint old town exploring the treasures of the halls and cathedrals, one is quite ready to tumble into the wide, high beds and between the delicious linen sheets float away into a dreamless sleep of content.

Church spires often of amazing form and delicacy of design, and busy windmills, appearing above rows of symmetrical poplars against piled-up cumulous clouds, are the prominent objects of the landscape. And although it must be said that the view is somewhat monotonous there is much that is of delight to the eye in the well-cultivated fields, broken at intervals by stretches of bramble, and patches of scarlet poppies, and blue corn flowers, against the ripe yellow of the grain and the sluggish veins of canal water winding between orderly rows of pollards or poplars, with small,

strange-looking, red-brick country houses half hidden in clumps of dense foliage, well walled in and moated with bulbous Flemish towers and minarets rising high in the air. Small, sad looking villages surrounding huge unfinished church towers, compact towns behind solid looking fortifications embowered in ivy, storks flying above the chimneys belching black smoke, or long stretches of green fields upon which are bleaching miles, literally, of linen. Churches are everywhere, but the small "vicinaux," a light, distinct railway, is the best means to use in exploring the country. The fares are astonishingly cheap, and they stop everywhere or anywhere along the road, as the peasantry use them, one can get a good idea of the people and customs. 'Alongside of the main roads one will find cycle paths kept in good order by the authorities, who charge a duty tax of twelve per cent. *ad valorem* on all bicycles entering the country.

In the purely Flemish part of Flanders, that is, the region of West Flanders, between Antwerp and the North Sea, the race is free from mixture with the French or Dutch, and here the traveler will find only the Flemish tongue used, as many or most of the people do not understand French. The newspapers are printed in Flemish and contain little besides the news of the locality, as a result the people know nothing of what is going on

in the world. Education is rudimentary and in the hands of the Church which has been successful despite endeavors of the Anti-clerical party, in defeating attempts to make it general and compulsory.

The peasantry are then as it may be surmised, quite submerged in superstition and ignorance, but while this is a fact, it must be admitted that they are hard working and seemingly contented with their meager fare and wages. Although showing a tendency to rise, living is not dear at present. I found that their chief articles of diet are black bread, potatoes, and salt pork. On the coast there is much smuggling carried on in tobacco, which is a state monopoly in France and quite free in Belgium, therefore the astute Fleming makes a neat little income out of the trade in a quiet way.

There is not the same quaintness in the farmhouse life as we found in Holland nor is there the degree of cleanliness, but the farmhouses are substantial if dirty as to the exterior; inside the living rooms are of good size and the furnishing is quaint. There is not as much blue tiling as in Holland, and open fires on the hearths are rare, instead we found curious, iron, brass-bound stoves of strange shape, projecting into the room, the elbow pipe of which is flat and quite crowded with pots and pans, most picturesquely, too. Many valuable old



AN ANTIQUE SHOP





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cabinets and chairs are to be found, and the dealer has not yet exhausted this region. I could have purchased any quantity of fine old cabinets and Spanish leather chairs for small sums. Good brass, seemingly old, and a great quantity of pewter are to be found in the market places on fair days, and one may have a most enjoyable time bartering for them with the shrewd dealers. On these market days, one may study the Fleming to advantage. A good deal of hard drinking goes on, for the Fleming is a drunkard by choice and inclination. It is said that more beer and stronger drink is consumed per capita here than anywhere else in Europe, and nearly every other house in the smaller villages is licensed to sell liquor. The sign "Hier Verkoopt men Drank" (which looks like language gone mad) is over the doorways, and here and in the houses marked "Estaminet," or "Herberg" beer may be had for about a penny a glass. In the evenings these places are noisy with loud talking, for the Fleming is as boisterous now as when Jan Van Steen or Teniers painted him, and his habits since have changed but little, and the scenes at the Kermesse in Ypres or Furnes, when the people are gathered together after the harvest for a good time are in no way different. There is dancing the night long in the streets, shooting with bow and arrow at marks or objects

hung on high with poles or mast decorated with ribbons and flags, while the older ones sit apart under the streets or by the road drinking beer and smoking their pipes or gossiping. Of course the dress has changed, one sees little nowadays of the old costumes save in the remote districts and on the borders, but in spirit it is all very like the old pictures.

In accompanying me across the plains of Flanders, the reader with a map at his elbow will wonder and query why we did not follow a logical sequence of towns, but I must answer him once and for all, that if he wishes to pin me down to any set mode of travel, or ask me the why and wherefore of everything which he may read in this book, that he and I will not agree, that we did thus and so for no reason whatsoever, that we had no set plan; that I made sketches of whatever I fancied and that if we did not like what we saw we passed on instantly without inquiring why. So if he is not content to come with us in this haphazard way, then let him close this book and read no further, for we pass hither and yon over the country seeking entertainment only, and thus and so we reach Ypres, dating from the year 900. "The death-dealing malaria" written of in *the ancient* chronicles has long ceased to exist. Indeed when I asked a red-faced man in the railway

carriage about it, as we were approaching the town, he became almost abusive and waved his arms, and let his cigar go out while he gave me facts and figures to prove the healthfulness of the region. Facts and figures which I promptly forgot by the way, he was so entertaining and amusing in his excitement. I saw fruitful fields of linen bleaching on the grass, and rows of tall poplars through the car windows and finally the vast tower of the Cloth Hall above the mellow, red-tiled roofs, and there we were at the station where a half dozen or so of passengers alighted. Showing our tickets to the man at the gate we emerged into the square or place before the town. No conveyance of any sort was in sight, indeed none was to be had. I hailed a peasant who stared stolidly watching us, and tried my Flemish upon him. To my delight and surprise he understood me — no small compliment — and shouldered our belongings. We passed part of the ancient ramparts over a deep moat of black water, carved with pond lilies in bloom, where white swans swam. This was formerly the "Boter Plas" (Butter Market) and here was the Temple Poort (Temple Gate) through which (our companion of the railway journey said) marched the Crusaders in seven, eight, or nine hundred A. D.— I forget which. But certainly there was a thorough old-

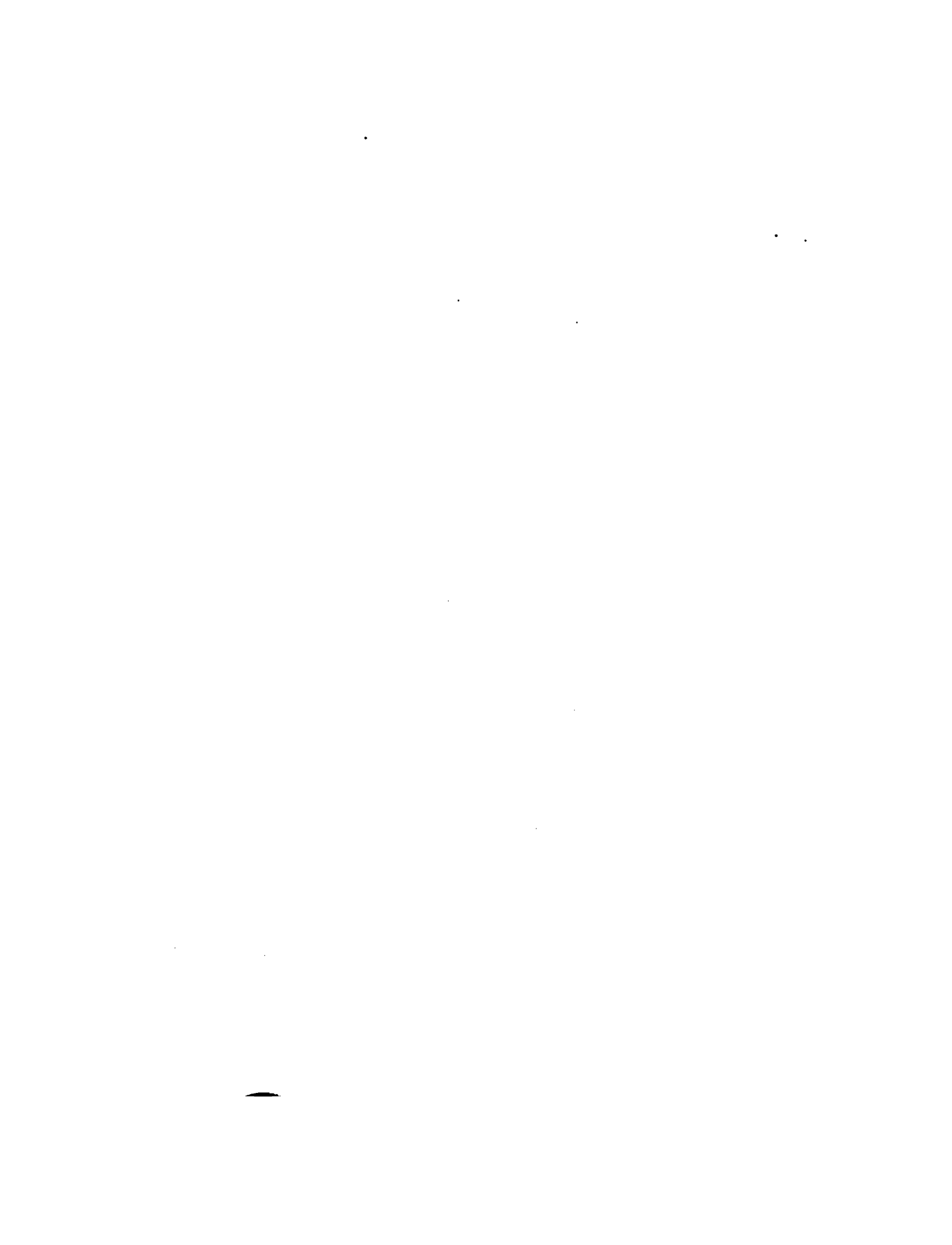
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world appearance to it all, the crooked winding streets paved with rough stone blocks; the narrow sidewalk permitting no more than one to walk at a time, so that one must step aside to let the basket-laden market people pass. Peasants stand stolidly in the streets, and rarely give way. They are not discourteous intentionally, these Flemings, they know no better. They are boors born. On either hand are Gothic façades of stone, or yellow and red brick with time-worn cartouches and sculptured figures, exquisitely wrought doorways, and lintels carved in wood, which should be in museums. Some of the smaller houses are out of the perpendicular and have projecting upper stories. Pointed vaulted gateways open upon quaint inner courts, rows of quaint gables with zigzags breaking the sky-line are on either side.

The soul of bygone days seems to live in these curious old houses, and this impression is enforced by the strange solitude and silence broken only by our own footsteps. I could hardly help stopping to make a quick note of the quaint street in my sketch book, and this act of mine removed whatever suspicion of us remained in the mind of our traveling companion, who thereafter became our somewhat obtrusive friend and who accompanied us to the hotel where he found good accommodations at astonishingly low rates; our room over-



THE GREAT CLOTH HALL — YPRES



looking the ancient market square, at the end of which rose the mighty tower of the Cloth Hall, reminding one of the Houses of Parliament in London.

Ypres is so remarkable a town, so filled with monuments of the past, that there would not be place for the enumeration of all its wonders here. I can only then catalogue a few of the most remarkable and notable houses, such as the wooden façade at the end of the Rue de Lille, which, while not as fine as the one erected in the Guild Hall, is of note for the reason that it is still occupied as a residence. Dating from the beginning of the fifteenth century, it gives an excellent idea of the appearance of Flemish architecture of the Middle Ages, for then most of the façades were of wood. A by-law formerly in force here forbade the repair of wooden houses, and before it was repealed eight or ten years ago or less, some of the really magnificent wooden house fronts on the Grand' Place were torn down and poor-looking stone ones erected in their places; for this reason the Grand' Place has lost much of its former picturesqueness. Someone at length awoke to the situation and petitioned the Throne, and the law was repealed, but meanwhile the buildings which lent character to Ypres were fast disappearing. Now, happily, there is a society with offices ap-



pointed by the state to protect and restore these "Monuments," so our friend informed us.

Down the Rue de Lille stands a fine old house known as the "Steenen," but I could not find out anything about it, even from the custode. It might have been one of the Templars' houses, but I could not find the double iron cross with which all such are decorated. It may have been a seignorial dwelling; at any rate it is worth going a long distance to see. When Ypres was one of the largest of the towns in the Netherlands, the Knights Templars erected here their first council or meeting-house. The archives mention the erection of a house near the Templars' Gate, by one Godfrey or Geoffrey de Saint Omer, and it may be that this is the house. On the first floor are rectangular openings, pointed windows above and a battlement around the roof and wall with flanking turrets. For some years, up to the time of the revival of interest in the ancient town, this fine house was used as a brewery, then in 1897 the government purchased it, and after renovating it in good style, has used it since as a post-office. In 1886, when I first saw Ypres, the ancient walls and the moat beneath the old fortifications were fairly intact, and I am glad that I remember them as they were, for since then they have almost entirely, with the exception of a small portion near

the station, been razed, and the moat nearly all filled in. The aspect then has changed, so that from outside in the fields one can hardly identify it. At the station a row of modern Flemish brick houses has been erected, and while not unattractive, does not compensate the antiquary for what has been destroyed, but there are very pretty flower beds below the walls still standing, over which grow tall trees and these are beautifully mirrored in the dark waters of the old moat. But it is to the Grand' Place that one instinctively turns, one of the finest and largest in all Flanders, nearly always empty and deserted, it is only on market days that it awakens to life and movement, and then this whole vast square is filled with great heavy-wheeled carts somewhat like our old prairie "schooners," and long lines of canvas-covered stalls filled with merchandise dear to the peasants. Early in the morning they begin to arrive on these days, and there is clattering of wooden-shod feet, and the chattering of women's voices, punctuated by the barking of the savage-looking Flemish dogs, which are harnessed two and three abreast to some of the green wagons.

One cannot help wondering how Ypres looked in the thirteenth or fourteenth century with its two hundred thousand inhabitants, a stronghold inhabited by a wealthy and powerful class of

burghers and nobles, whose magnificence and education attracted the attention and jealousy of the other towns of Flanders, and whose renown reached even to England and inflamed the cupidity of the hordes who infested the borders. Ypres was the first and greatest of Flemish towns up to the end of the thirteenth century, and boasted of four hundred guilds within its walls, and it was the wars of the following century, the great struggles of the burghers against the counts, the neighboring jealous communes, and the covetous kings of France which reduced the wonderful town to nothingness and ruin. Standing in the Grand' Place before the great "Halles," the largest of all the commercial buildings of the Netherlands, the most formidable of the guild fortresses in the silent, grass-grown market-place, where one's footfall awakens echoes, the mental picture of its former greatness becomes very real, and it is not hard to imagine the great crowds of nobles and fair women clad in rustling silks and fur-bound satins hung with jewels and preceded by armed archers and lackeys, all hurrying towards the tragic ending of their days of magnificence and arrogance. Along the face of this immense building of three floors are some forty or more "ogival" windows, and a crenelated gallery. The roof, so vast and high, is ornamented with



FLEMISH MILK-WOMAN AND DOG-CART



four magnificent gilded and emblazoned shields of great size. Two beautiful flêched towers ornament each end. The high windows light the first or main floor, and alternate with "arcatures" which enframe a great number of life-size statues of historical personages, counts and countesses of Flanders. Many of these are modern, replacing those destroyed by the Republican Armies of bloody '93.

Rising from the center of the façade the great square tower of the Beffroi, pierced by high pointed windows, flanked at each corner by octagonal towers, contains the carillon of thirty-two bells — these newly installed, and of very sweet tone.

Commenced in 1200 the Cloth Hall, for that is what it was built for, was abandoned several times during the troublous times, and it was not until 1304-5 that it was completed. The ground floor to-day serves as a butchers' hall, and presents a most picturesque sight on market days when it is thronged with peasants. On the western face of the building is a charming construction with much gilding and statuary, seemingly temporarily placed, and not belonging to the place at all; but while at first sight one wishes it away, its beauty and delicacy is so alluring that one becomes really attached to it. It is called the "Nieuwerck," yet

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in spite of its title it was already old in the fifteenth century. It is of many windows with a graceful gabled finial in the center and at both ends, the center pierced by a lovely, tall Gothic window which illumines the ancient chapel of the "Echevins." The angle of the "Nieuwerck" is supported by roofs and gables of excellent character, which have outlived the zeal of the modern mason, unlike the façade of the "Chatellenie" farther down the Grand' Place. The interior of this great hall is not disappointing, as I feared it would prove to be. The wonderful main hall abandoned after the devastations of the Revolutionists, has been most happily and tastefully restored, and during this process some really remarkable portraits of counts and countesses of Flanders were uncovered which were painted during the periods of 1322 to 1469. Standing in this huge hall paved with stone, one can realize its immensity, occupying as it does the whole length of the edifice, and divided by an arcade sustaining the Beffroi. Above, the roof appears lost in the shadows, and here and there great beams of live oak appear, which were brought to Ypres from Norway. On the large panels between the high pointed windows are some very good decorative paintings in a somewhat unfinished state, "competitions" of two Belgian

artists, Messrs. Pauwels and Delbecke. The annals of Ypres are unfolded pictorially here before one's eye. The great hall is so vast and high that the façade entire of one of the ancient wooden houses of Ypres has been set up bodily against one of the walls. Opposite this immense edifice is another notable construction dating from the same epoch, namely the ancient "Boucherie" or Meat Hall. Here at this day even, the butchers are installed, and here the thrifty Flemish housewives gather to "cheapen" the daily purchase of meat. The hall is supported by large stone columns, and is lighted by double stage windows, above it is a sort of museum, containing a collection of pictures, archeological and divers other objects of greater or lesser interest. The rear gives on a small "place" nested among high gables above which the great tower of the "Halles" pierces the sky. Behind the latter, above the "Nieuwerck," rises the tower and roof of the great church, the Cathedral of Saint Martin, an imposing and superb edifice designed and built at the same time as the "Halles," and ornamented by a portal of really magnificent proportions which opens into a transept before the belfrey, and there is another one almost as fine below the tower,—great square construction of beautiful lines and lofty windows. The interior



is very imposing, somewhat spoilt, however, by the clumsy altar of black and white marble supported by Roman columns of doubtful taste, surmounted by a large statue of Saint Martin mounted on a horse. Besides the numerous tombs of the bishops in the choir, one finds a simple stone before the altar, upon which is sculptured a cross on which is the date 1638. This stone covers the resting place of Cornelius Jansenius, Bishop of Ypres, who died of the pest, "and is glorified forever by his charities and good deeds," so says the priest at my elbow. Beside the church are the remains of the Abbey of St. Martin, a silent cloister of charming construction, and over all solitude broods.

Two centuries of most extraordinary prosperity made Ypres the first city of Flanders. Her stuffs, her linen, her lace, not to mention any of her other manufactures, gave her merited renown the world over; and the bravery of her soldiers, who fought so well against overwhelming odds, covered her banners with glory, even though they were steeped in blood shed for a cause destined for failure. Organized in the trades, and in companies of burghers, flocking to their banners at the stroke of the bell in the belfrey, the Grand' Place must have presented a stirring sight; and the joyous entries of troops; the sudden alarums

of war; the sallies against the enemy attacking the walls; these were the pictures presented during the golden period of the history of Ypres. Then came disaster after disaster, sieges innumerable, wars, religious revolutions, and the ravages of disease and pestilence. The Reform quite finished then, what was left of Ypres, and the religious edifices were sacked and burned, after which the bloody hand of Alva was wiped upon the once smiling plains beyond the walls. But Ypres was not alone in her agony. Each of the neighboring towns suffered. Is there any history more tragic than that of Ghent, her rival? Yet Ghent has survived and enjoys even to-day a certain modicum of power and prosperity, while poor Ypres is hardly known to the outside world. The ravages of the pestilence at the close of the fifteenth century carried off upwards of fifteen thousand people, following which Alexander Farnese besieged the town and upon its capitulation there remained but five thousand men among the ruins to lay down their arms before the victorious army. Of the ancient ramparts of the seventeenth century, there yet remain some vestiges at the south and east of the town, making with deep moats embossed with lilies a most picturesque frame for the old town; ancient ramparts upon which grow large trees in which rooks nest, and

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over which one may see the towers and the red-roof tops of the houses. One of the ancient gates is found between two round towers and is called the "Porte de Lille," and there are silent, small streets winding between picturesque old houses whose corners are ornamented by scrolls, and occasionally the statue of the Virgin in a niche before which burns a lighted lamp hanging from an iron arm over the streetway; streets zigzagging between the high stuccoed walls of hidden gardens, and an occasional small chapel, or cemetery filled with tall iron crosses bedecked with tattered and often rusty wire-beaded wreaths. Numerous most interesting façades and gables are to be found in the Rue de Lille; for instance the beautiful entrance to the "Hospice Belle," its front pierced by a large "ogival" window, at each side of which is a niche in Renaissance style framing a kneeling statue of Christine de Grimes and Salomon Belle, her lord, the founder of the "Hospice" in the thirteenth century.

Farther along is the high-towered "Maison des Templars," long in ruins. It was happily restored a few years ago. Although called the house of the Templars it has proved never to have been occupied by the order, but, nevertheless, the name sticks to it. The town has taken it over as a sort of office, and for a town in a state of

decadence, of a diminished population, certainly one may learn a lesson of courage and faith, for Ypres is alive to the value of her "remains," and is constantly restoring and repairing her monuments of past greatness. At the extreme end of this street is an example of the wooden houses of the Middle Ages. One descends a couple of steps into a narrow hall at the right of which is a most curious sort of pen or chamber in which in early times sat the watchmen; the boards and flooring are warped and "crazy," but one can get a good idea of what constituted a dwelling house of the middle classes in those days. As I stood in the doorway, an ill-kempt and sour-looking man slouched forward and demanded in no civil manner my business, and as I had none save curiosity, I politely lifted my hat to him and withdrew. Evidently he was not satisfied for he followed A—— and me to the corner of the street where he lounged, hands in pockets, watching us until we turned a corner. Two religious edifices farther down, almost opposite to each other, are well worth study; one, the Hospital for Old Women, called Sainte Godelieve, has a charming belfry.

In the doorway of another tall wooden-framed and curiously gabled house the custode or watchman sat. The sound of my footfall brought forth a savage-looking individual who glared at me, and

I was so alarmed at his hostility that I forgot my Flemish for the moment; to save my life I could not think of anything to say but "Als t' u blieft," and this evidently failed to appeal to him, so in some confusion I backed out, and it was not until I reached the corner of the street that I looked back, and saw him standing in the door. All at once he raised his fist and shook it at me so threateningly that I did not again look in his direction, thinking discretion the better part.

Two religious edifices of remarkable character are found in this vicinity, one, the small hospital of Saint Jean, or Sainte Godelieve, whichever is its correct name, is ornamented with a pretty tower seen at the end of an alleyway. The other, the church of Saint Pierre, is interesting because of its mediæval square tower shouldered by immense buttresses out of all proportion to its height and size, and pierced by Roman windows. This tower is flanked at the top by four slender tourelles, and capped by beautiful iron finials, the work, I am told, of a simple blacksmith of the town. Indeed, in nearly all the streets one can find façades of remarkable character and richness. In the street called "des Chins" will be found the Hotel de Grand, which has a double gable of quaint design, and in the Rue de Dixmude a



ANCIENT GATE AND MOAT — YPRES



magnificent façade, almost entirely covered with beautiful embroidery, I nearly wrote, of ogival design, which enframes the windows and the openings, farther ornamented by iron "ancons" or beam fastenings in the form of figures forming the date 1544; elsewhere another gable with statues of the thirteenth century in niches, all richly decorated.

In what is known as the "Marche au Betail," is found a group of ancient, time-stained Gothic houses of Renaissance tendencies, ornamented by innumerable medallions, sculptures, niches, bas-reliefs, and every sort of ornament in every conceivable spot, and yet the effect is remarkably fine and well worth studying. The medallions or bas-reliefs, showing the ships in high waves, are most quaint and unusual. These corporation houses or Guild Halls constitute a study in themselves, and nowhere in Europe can they be found in such profusion as in Flanders.

The Fish Market in the Rue au Beurre has a portico over the entrance dated 1714 and showing Neptune, God of the Sea, trident held aloft, seated in an ornate car or chariot drawn by dolphins, and showing the arms of Ypres. The archers of Saint Sebastian have here a shooting field and house, enframed in the midst of great



luxuriant trees against part of the ancient ramparts, and here devotees of the art gather on long summer afternoons to practice.

The Fleming knows well how to enjoy himself and I can but picture the contrast between these people at their pleasures, and our own excitable, nervous pleasure-seekers — and I must say that there is much to admire in the peaceful ways of the Flemings.

All through Flanders before each small village will be found a lofty pole with gilded arrows at the top, rising above the red-tiled roofs, and these are poles to which birds are fastened, high in air, at which the members practice shooting with arrows.

I am told that "The Compagnies de Chevaliers de arc" and "The Confreres de Saint Sebastian" in Flanders and Picardy had a common origin in the same century. They have endured in spite of wars, the change of manners, and people. The archers of Picardy were distinguished for their efficiency and bravery at Bouvines and in the wars against the English, and the Flemish archers enjoyed great renown for their onslaughts during the wars of the fourteenth century, and keeping these historical recollections fresh in their minds, the burghers in these small towns, forgetting that the long bow is an anachronism in these

days of gun shooting cling to the prehistoric arm, and glorify it. All of which moves our travelers to mirth when they come upon these gatherings, but to me it is not without poetry and allurements.

Here at the end of this Rue de Lille, one is in the very midst of the thickly-populated, working-class portion of the town, or rather, as it is styled, the district of St. Peters; and the narrow, rather smelly streets are crowded on pleasant days with long lines of women and girls at work, cushions on laps, at the lacemaking. The pattern is known as "Point de Valenciennes" and is often beautiful. The Porte de Lille is the finest and best preserved of the ancient town walls and is fortified by three massive, semicircular towers, bearing the date 1395. A wide, stone bridge traverses the very deep, black waters of the moat, and the lofty walls, continuing from this point as far as the open-air swimming bath, are said to have been designed and built by Vauban. Some remains of lunettes and redans will be found on the other side of the Porte or gate. We walked up a steep, damp pathway bordered by shrubbery and large trees to the top of the ramparts, where there is a pleasant walk leading almost, if not quite, around the town, which we would have followed but that the rain, threatening all the morning, now came down in large drops, and for quite a half hour we were

forced to crouch beneath a tall tree until it ceased. To the left one may see the Pond at Zillebeke, which was dug in 1295 and which, up to within a few years, furnished the sole water supply of the town. In the Rue de Dixmude opposite the "Biebuyck" house is a curious relic of the administrative history of the town—a medallion on the house front with the inscription "S. Princen-Stede-S.-Jans-Rolleghem," with a coat of arms of the family in the center. Northwards the whole immediate neighborhood belonged to the manor of Rolleghem, the origin of which is lost in the dark ages of the early history of Ypres, but down to recent times it retained its character and independence as a separate bailiwick.

The whole vicinity is filled with interest and undeniable charm. In Zillebeke in the old church we found a remarkable Romanesque baptismal font dating from the tenth century. A huge, stone basin ornamented with a double row of running, conventional floral pattern and supported on a squatly round column and surmounted by a conical top or cover on which is a ball and cross. It is still in use. A walk of three-quarters of an hour along the Chaussee de Bailleul brings one to the pond of Dickebusche, excavated in 1320 by Count Robert de Bethune, and which now

supplies Ypres with its drinking water. Here we found a small inn, the "Vijverhuis," presided over by a fat, red-faced little man, who gave us an excellent dinner of fish which he scooped up in a net and brought alive for our inspection. The small, sooty, "vicinal" railway brings one to the village of Kemmel, in the old church of which we found a fine painting by Jordaens, "The Adoration of the Magi," and continuing on in the tram we explored Messines which was the scene of a succession of pillages and massacres, so the local antiquary told us, and related some facts in the history of Adela, daughter of Robert, King of France, and wife of Baldwin V of Flanders, who built here an abbey in 1027 of which she became abbess after her husband's death. The Countess Richilda fifty years afterwards burned the town and wishing to end her life, which had been spent in excess and cruelty, she afterwards had the abbey rebuilt, and retiring to its shelter died there an ordinary nun. This abbey consisted of thirty nuns of noble families, and attached to it was a chapter of twelve canons. Four of the abbesses were of royal blood and birth from France, and the wealth of the abbey was very great. It existed until 1776 when the Empress Maria Theresa formed it into a school for the orphans of military officers, and it is now called the "Institute Royal

de Messines" and houses over two hundred girls.

In an old Romanesque vault beneath the choir of the church in 1890 was found the remains of the sarcophagus of Adela, the daughter of Robert, King of France, who was interred in 1079. This parish church, formerly that of the ancient abbey, is an immense, fortress-looking structure, massive in its severity, and constructed of a sort of iron-stone found hereabouts. Its tower is square and capped by a singular, pepper-box-shaped dome which contains the bells. It is a mixture of Renaissance and Romanesque mixed quaintly with the Gothic style. I might have climbed the steep steps to the top of the tower — M. Verriest, the amiable custode was most anxious that I should — but I forbore, preferring to sit quietly before the door of his comfortable little café opposite until it was time to take the "vicinal" back to Ypres. Wervicq, near by, is a small town with a most tremendous history, now given up to the peaceful cultivation of flax and a most villainous kind of tobacco. Its origin carries one to the days of the Roman occupation, and in the itinerary of Antoninus it is named Viroviacum. At the commencement of the fourteenth century it operated 1,000 busy looms and was a great cloth-weaving center, but the French attacked and de-



THE HISTORY OF THE TOWNS

the houses were two or three

and some of them were the church

of St. Peter and the remains of the

old wall of the city of Rome.

It was built in the year 1000. This

is the only one that has come out alive

of the destruction of the city of Rome

and the construction of the city of Rome

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WINTER IN A FLEMISH TOWN



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stroyed the town in 1382 and drove the workers away. It boasts of a remarkable church, which Schayes in his "Histoire de l'Architecture" declares to "surpass in importance St. Martins in Courtrai." In spite of its simplicity of style it is undoubtedly one of the finest of the old Belgian churches, because of its exact and elegant proportions, and the height and width of its nave and aisles with their cylindrical columns. Venturing to disagree with this high authority, it seems to me that the width of the aisles is one of its faults. There are some very curious monuments in the church, and recent excavations, bringing to light fragments of sculpture of evident Roman character, lead authorities to believe that it is the ancient site of some temple of pagan times.

In restoring the edifice, the workmen brought to light a number of stone, polychromed funeral ornaments, consisting of costumed figures minus heads, covered with coatings of whitewash or plaster, and there are fine specimens of the art of wood carving seen in one of the ambulatory chapels, and in a confessional. The spire, which to my mind is not an improvement, is modern and out of character with the light stone, open-work gallery surrounding the roof, reminding one of the cathedral at Ypres, especially the tourelles at each end.

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Another small town easily reached is Poperinghe which we explored, formerly a small manor lying among a belt of huge trees, almost a virgin forest in ancient times. An appendage in the year 668 of the Abbey of St. Bertin, it became free in 1147 and, devoted to the weaving of cloth, soon was admitted a member of the Hanseatic League of England. In 1560 it had 17,000 workmen within its walls, and thereafter the troubles during the Reformation finished its importance and left it a scene of ruin and decay. In 1584 four hundred weavers crept back to its ruins and attempted to reestablish something of its former importance, but without avail; its day had passed, and to-day small traces are to be found of its great canal once thronged with ships of England and the South.

The streets of the town are quiet, lined with small, stuccoed, single-story houses, and the inhabitants are given over to the cultivation of hops. Its church of St. John, begun in 1290 has a modernized interior of small interest. Save for the lonely organ gallery, the pulpit and the wooden vaulting, St. Bertins is not remarkable, but these objects alone are worth a journey to see. The building dates from the fourteenth century and consists of a nave and two aisles. Over the altar is a good painting of "The Adoration of the Shepherds,"

by whom I could not ascertain. Notre Dame has a most striking interior with pillars of a blue stone, and with the yellow brick work, the woodwork, and the effect of strong light from the tall windows, gives a most remarkable ensemble.

Carved in the extravagant period of Louis XV the stalls are of wonderful character and design. I should like to have studied the paintings of which there are many, but the day was drawing to a close, and our train was due to take us back to Ypres, which we reached soon after nine o'clock, dusty, travel-stained and tired, but most appreciative of a day well and profitably spent.

# IEPER, O IEPER.

TUYNDAG-LIEDJE.

*Begleiding van FL. VAN DUVER.*

*Moll.*

ie - per, o Ie - per, hoe toont gy u ver -

*p*

Detailed description: This system contains the first two staves of music. The top staff is a vocal line in treble clef with a key signature of one flat and a common time signature. It begins with the lyrics 'ie - per, o Ie - per, hoe toont gy u ver -'. The bottom two staves are a piano accompaniment in bass and treble clefs. The piano part starts with a dynamic marking of *p* (piano) and includes various musical notations such as accents and slurs.

heugd! Op u-we Tuyndag-tees-te ziet men u in vol - le

Detailed description: This system contains the next two staves of music. The top staff continues the vocal line with the lyrics 'heugd! Op u-we Tuyndag-tees-te ziet men u in vol - le'. The bottom two staves continue the piano accompaniment, maintaining the same key signature and time signature as the first system.

IEPER, O IEPER.

vreugd. Vraegt men u waer-om gy al dien opstel

The first system of the musical score consists of three staves. The top staff is the vocal line, starting with a treble clef and a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The lyrics 'vreugd. Vraegt men u waer-om gy al dien opstel' are written below the staff. The middle and bottom staves are for the piano accompaniment, with a grand staff (treble and bass clefs). The piano part begins with a piano dynamic marking 'p'.

doet, Antwoord vry-moe-dig, dat het geschieden

The second system of the musical score consists of three staves. The top staff is the vocal line, continuing the melody. The lyrics 'doet, Antwoord vry-moe-dig, dat het geschieden' are written below the staff. The middle and bottom staves are for the piano accompaniment. The piano part features some slurs and accents over the notes.

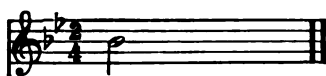
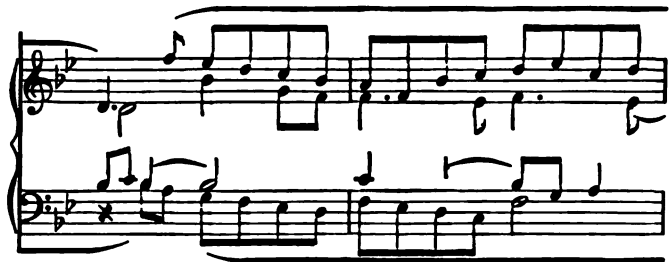
moet Uyt een dankbaere pligt, voor't weldaet u ge-

The third system of the musical score consists of three staves. The top staff is the vocal line, ending with a fermata over the final note. The lyrics 'moet Uyt een dankbaere pligt, voor't weldaet u ge-' are written below the staff. The middle and bottom staves are for the piano accompaniment, with a piano dynamic marking 'p'.

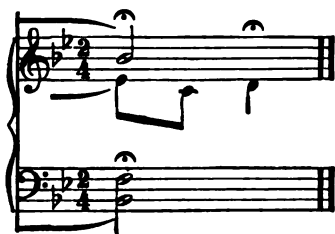
IEPER, O IEFER.



daen Door Onse Vrouw van Tuynne, die in nood u by kwam



staen.



## *Dixmude*

*A* SMALL, melancholy town of great antiquity on the sluggish Yser, surmounted by fertile, green meadows, and pointed here and there by a lazily-turning mill. This town had formerly a rich population numbering some thirty thousand. It has hardly eleven hundred now, and its tortuous streets lined with massive stone houses heavily shuttered, its fine, large Grand' Place with the imposing Church of St. Nicolas and the beautiful town hall are all that remain of its former splendor. It had once great renown as a port of entry for large ships, and merchants from all parts of the world congregated in its streets and markets, where now the grass grows, and the pigeons softly coo in the sunshine.

Of the old walls, ancient and bastioned, nothing now remains, and Dixmude is content with the



renown of her butter and eggs, and an occasional market fair suffices for her entertainment. The ancient Corporations and Brotherhood, once so powerful, have disappeared; even the palaces they once occupied have been destroyed by the hordes who descended upon the hapless town from Ghent and Bruges in 1553, during which year the château and the halls were burned together with three hundred houses.

A few cripples were in the vast square, and some children were playing in a very subdued way with a large, fierce-looking dog in a doorway. We found the door of the Gothic Hotel de Ville wide open and entered without finding a soul in any of the bare rooms, which are used as offices of the Gen d' Armerie and the town clerk. The rooms, bare and poor-looking, are quite clean in contrast to some of those in the larger cities, but there is nothing of interest to be found in them.

At the corner outside I encountered a shabby man in a sort of military cap and much the worse for liquor, who was quite civil to us, volunteering to show us the Church of Saint Nicolas, which he said contained a Jubé, or altar screen, of great antiquity and splendor, but when we reached the church it was closed fast, and although we went to the house of the Verger or Custode, he was not to be found, and as he carries the key with him,

no one could let us in, so we wandered around through the crooked smelly streets, gazing up at the walls of the church, and at the long narrow Gothic lancet windows with which they are pierced. The inebriated individual expressed great indignation that we could not see the wonders of the church, and we had some difficulty in getting rid of him. Indeed, I had to be quite rude to him before he would take himself off, and thereafter at intervals I caught sight of him watching us surreptitiously around street corners. The eleven hundred inhabitants might easily stand in a corner of the Grand' Place, which is larger than that of Furnes and Nieuport combined, and much less frequented than either. The passerby, there is rarely more than one, disturbs the silence and, as I said before, one hears scarcely any sounds save the chimes in the tower, or the cooing of doves on the cornices.

The effect upon one is charming, however, and the picture is a most interesting one of a deserted mediæval town. There are many old stone houses, a most formidable and forbidding-looking prison with tall windows barred with rusty iron, a well-restored Hotel de Ville, and rising above the quaint, red-tiled roofs, the dark somber mass of the tower of Saint Nicolas. The eleven hundred inhabitants of Dixmude have among them

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some of good taste, for the Hotel de Ville is, as I have said, restored in good style, that is to say, the Flemish ogival. It has a "Breteche" or open-air platform in the style of the Middle Ages, from which the nobles or the guild heads used to address the people on great occasions.

The Church of Saint Nicolas, mentioned above, a vast structure with Gothic tower, is of great interest and the interior is said to be much floriated, resembling in detail beautiful lace work, but as we could not find the custode, who had taken himself off for the day, we had to take for granted the wonders of the interior, the great Jubé, or altar screen, one of the marvels of Europe, the high altar, and the great paintings by the Netherland masters. Wandering about the silent tortuous streets, we came upon a small square surmounted by picturesque fifteenth-century houses, and a tiny fish market with not a soul in sight, save our inebriated, good-humored guide, who regarded us from a distance, and a crippled girl who sat disconsolately in a small doorway under the "abside" of the church, stroking a large cat which circled about her with tail erect.

We came upon old houses bordering the canal, a fine windmill near the Grand' Place, and the Beguinage, a tiny one, enclosed within high walls, with much whitewash everywhere, and a triangle



THE GRAND' PLACE — DIXMUDE

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of bright green grass upon which long strips of coarse linen were bleaching; at one end is a chapel, the door of which was open, disclosing a dim interior and candles before the altar shining like yellow stars. Here and there a black-cloaked old woman was kneeling on a rush-bottomed chair praying. None of them even glanced at us as we stood watching them, so we stole away as quietly as possible. Small red-roofed houses line the sides of the little square, built of brick, white-washed, with a border near the ground either tarred or painted black, giving a most strange effect to the whole place. Not a sound disturbs the silence, a black-cloaked form passes along close to the wall without a sound. It is a Beguine. As she draws near we see her face beneath the wide white head-dress, a face rosy, round, but lined with wrinkles. She bows to us courteously, but she does not smile, and then passes on silently, but she turns as she reaches a small gateway and looks back at us, then the gate opens to her, and when it closes we are alone in the small square. Perhaps we had seen the wraith of Saint Begga herself, that holy woman who founded the order so many centuries ago, who knows?

Upon descending from the railway carriage I turned to speak to A—— when I felt a touch

on my arm. There, looking up into my face, was a small wizened man whose whole narrow face seemed to come to a point at the end of his nose, under which was a small stubby mustache. Two little beady twinkling eyes met mine, with a most quizzical and yet appealing expression, and in a hoarse voice he ejaculated, "American!" "Yes," I answered. "What can I do for you?"

"Say, Neighbor, my life is saved — damfitaint! Say, I'm off the track, and there ain't narry a civilized man in this town. I've been here now for two hours, and I can't make anyone understand what I want. I must 'a' got on a wrong train in Antwerp for here's where they dumped me. What's the name? Dicks somethin' or other, damfitaint. I ain't had no lunch, nothing but chocolate tablets, and I want a beefsteak and fried potatoes, but these geezers can't make out what I'm askin' for. Say, Neighbor, would you help me out? I ain't no bunko-steerer — you needn't be afraid of me. I'm all right; I'm just off the track and can't speak the language. Gee! say, when I heard you speak to madame here, it was the sweetest sound I've heard since I left Ne' York. Me? — Oh, I got a concession at the Brussels Exposition, — typewriters and supplies (this is not, of course, the business he had in hand). I came over on the *Finland*, landed

in Antwerp last week, had a bully trip, but when I got ashore my troubles began. Say, what d'y' think, they don't know the name of their own town, 'Antwerp, I mean; some of 'em call it Anverse, and one geezer calls it Antwerpen. What d'y' think? — Say, look here, you know, I'm square, I don't want to borrow any money of you; all I want is company while I eat, and then if you'll put me on the train for Brussels, I'll be your friend for life. Here's my card, so that you can see that I'm all straight."

We had him to luncheon with us, and he had his fill of beefsteak and fried potatoes. I put him on the train for Ghent, with written directions for his future guidance, and the last we saw of him was his red necktie glowing in the window of the compartment, as the train puffed out of the Dixmude station.

#### THE VINKENIERS

A large sign before the doorway of a small stucco house, which was decorated with wreaths and vines attracted our attention. It bore the legend in quaint lettering, "Vinkeniers Welcom," followed by the words "Prijskamp voor Blinde Vinken," by which I understood that a prize competition of blind finches was about to take place the following morning, Sunday, at seven o'clock.



Sure enough, the following morning the street was fairly alive with peasants of both sexes, young and old, all eagerly discussing the coming contest. Men and boys all dressed in their stiff, best Sunday clothes were parading in gorgeously colored carpet slippers and bearing mysterious wooden boxes under their arms. I discovered that they were cages of chaffinches destined to take part in the competition. The cages varied in size, and were lavishly decorated with ornament and rude pictures of birds. Some of the cages were of really elaborate construction, often of polished oak or even a wood that resembled mahogany. The rustic Inn bearing the sign was headquarters of the local finch owners, for a huge banner of silk with gold fringe floated above the door. The competitors and their friends were in a great state of excitement and even at this early hour were consuming vast quantities of the thin yellow beer of which the people are inordinately fond, and every entry called for at least one "bock" on the part of the bird owner. A few of the men and boys were already opening their boxes or crates, and tenderly lifting out the small ornate cages with double wire fronts, designed to resist the attacks of cats. Numbers in large white figures had been chalked on the high brick wall at the roadside, with the object of

showing each competitor his place, and the police were walking up and down, hands behind their backs watching for trouble. I counted forty-eight competitors by the roadside, waiting for the signal to begin the contest.

Some of these men and boys had come for miles, I was told, and having placed their boxes about three yards apart stood about eying one another. The innkeeper told me that it is necessary to "blind" the birds in these "concours" as they will not sing when watched. He said that the eyes are not injured, the lids being stuck together by a slight touch of a red hot iron and that the work is done by an experienced hand, for otherwise a part of the lid might be left open in which case the cage must be covered or the shy occupant will not sing. He told me furthermore that the lids are easily opened again after the competition, but I fancied it all very cruel, and said so; to which he replied that the Belgian law would not countenance any cruelty, so the searing is done "over the border" in France. Even the catching of these birds is against the law in Belgium, but, he added, "the law is not enforced." The police, however, demand that each competitor shall carry on his person a written and stamped certificate as follows: "The undersigned burgomaster of the town of Dixmude hereby declares that M—,

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living at —, is the owner of blind chaffinches and that he does not practice the trade of bird selling." The burgomaster exacts a fee of one hundred francs for this paper, which is good for two weeks only.

The innkeeper informed me that the success or failure of a bird entered in competition depends upon a certain number of perfect trills in a given space of time, usually an hour, and that he had known "concours" during which one bird made a record of one thousand and twenty trills during the hour allotted. This bird brought one hundred and fifty francs after the contest, money prizes being invariably offered. These poor little creatures are thus often sources of great profit to their owners.

The great bell in the tower booming out the hour of seven o'clock, the manager of the "concours" gave the word to begin, in a loud voice, which brought the people out of the estaminets into the street. Each man took up his station before the bird which his neighbor had entered; each man, therefore, acted for his neighbor's bird, and carried a curious stick, painted black with a knob or ring at each end which, it was explained, denoted a certain number of bird's trills, "Chu-ee chu-ee chu-ee chiep" being called a perfect trill by the judges, the final "chiep" being the

most important and a failure upon the part of the bird to pronounce it renders the performance incomplete. The whole affair was conducted with a most comical seriousness by the competing owners. I fancied that the song of the bird was executed out of pure joy and gladness of heart, but I found that the notes were made in real anger, and I was told that in its wild state the finch is a most quarrelsome little creature, and that the "con-cours" is held in the early morning because the wild birds in the trees are then singing most lustily. The chirping of the imprisoned ones then proceeds from a real frenzy of desire to do battle with those at liberty. The matches are under the strictest control as to fairness and any competing owner found guilty of cheating is punished by fine and expulsion from the association. All at once the order was given to cease scoring and then real pandemonium ensued. The owner of the winner showed five hundred and more trills to his credit and paraded happily with his little blind charge up and down the line with the ornate cage containing his pet, and then proceeded to consume an immense glass of beer "all by his lonesome." The birds are usually caught by means of nets, and one method employed by some of the "Vinkeniers" is to fix a stuffed finch in the grass clearly visible to the birds in the hedges, while a live one in a cage

is carefully covered by leaves so as not to attract attention. A long net is then spread out on the grass between two stuffed birds, and when the wild ones are clustered about the decoys a quick pull on the string on the part of the operator in a nearby hedge easily catches them. Sometimes they are caught by attaching a limed twig to a tame bird which is allowed to run in the grass, and soon the wild ones gather to do battle, and one or more are generally caught by the bird lime on the dragging stick. All in all it is a most interesting sight, this "Concours Vinkeniers," and well worth our getting up so early in the morning.

## *Furnes and Vieupoort*

THE name sounds strangely in one's ears, and it is variously pronounced by the Flemish, as Feern, Foon and Fern; due, I think, to its proximity to the French frontier. I doubt if many travelers ever heard of it, and yet it is one of the most ancient and renowned of the towns of Flanders, whose origin is quite lost in the darkness of the ages. As early as 800 A. D. it was the theater of various Norman invasions and massacres, and even M. Leopold Plettinck, that indefatigable and learned student of Flemish history, has been unable to trace its beginnings. From his notes I got an immense amount of facts and figures which I cannot now disentangle, and much of it, indeed, I promptly forgot. Badouin (Baldwin) Bras de Fer, however, figured prominently in this the greatest of strongholds of Flanders. Likewise

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it figured in the famous Battle of the Spurs, and was visited by the Geux and sacked by them. It is mentioned in the war of the "Deux Roses," and was the seat of the ancient "Societe de Rhetorique," an organization of terrible significance in the time of the Inquisition. In the archives mention is made of a legend attributing its foundation to a temple dedicated to the god Woden in the beginning of the Christian era, upon the site of which now stands the ruins of the Church of St. Walburge. I wandered about the small garden where stands this venerable ruin, which must have been an immense cathedral and fortress in its time, but little now remains save a massive squatty pile of ruined masonry, with buttresses of tremendous strength, and pierced by a singularly beautiful and Gothic arched portal now bricked up, and the whole mass overgrown with bushes and small trees. It was to this sleepy little town that fell the honor of welcoming Leopold I, the first King of the Belgians, to his new kingdom when, coming from England, he landed at Dunkerque on the 17th of July, 1831. Nowhere on the frontier can one find such an example of a mediæval town as presented by Furnes, with its wandering, characteristic Flemish streets, its quaint corners, and its picturesque Grand' Place over which, piercing the gray cloudy sky, stands the

tall, hoary, brick tower of the belfry, capped with the traditional bulbous finial and its gilded lion rampant, and at one side over the small, steep-gabled row of ancient gray-fronted, red-tiled houses, the ancient buttresses of the restored cathedral. But it is to the massive, flat-topped tower of Saint Nicolas that one turns — ancient and hoary, of various shades of brick in horizontal bands of warm shades of gray, salmon and pink, pierced by three tall, lancet, Gothic windows or openings, in which hang the chimes. We found lodging in the Hotel of the “Nobele Rose” near the Grand’ Place, one of the oldest houses in the Netherlands. I am told that it was the palace of the Countess Gertrude of Flanders in 1093 A. D., and of Queen Mathilde of Portugal, widow of Philippe of Alsace, in 1218. The “Nobele Rose” is now a rather dark stone house of three stories, with a narrow doorway leading to the hall up three or four steep steps, which ushers one into a smoke-smelling room in the center of which is a shabby billiard table, used as a counter by the proprietor,— a fussy little man, who, we found, was in mortal terror of his wife, a bustling, red-cheeked young woman with a tremendous temper. There was a poor crippled youth, with a useless right hand, whom we discovered to be the man’s son by his first wife. I tried to make



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pension rates with the woman, but all I could extract was a promise to ask her husband, and that in any event she would make us most comfortable and all for a "modest price." I may say here that this "modest price" was highly imaginative on her part, and that we paid half as much again as we expected for the accommodation given, but I do not grudge the price, so entertained were we during our stay in Furnes. Sitting in the window of our room on the second floor, overlooking the narrow street, one is quite confounded by the evident antiquity of it all. Below, the peasants clatter wooden-shod over the rough stones that pave the narrow way. Small carts painted a lively green and drawn by fierce-looking, shaggy dogs in harness, barking furiously, pass rapidly to and fro. In the market place to the left wandering mountebanks are setting up their booths on squares marked out and numbered on the stones. Urchins and stolid-looking men stand spellbound speculating upon the mysteries of the gaudily-painted vans, some of which bear the words "Cinema Americain," and before which swarthy, ill-kempt women are preparing supper over singular-looking sheet-iron stoves in which they manage to build fierce fires of charcoal and a soft powdery "cannel," from which volumes of evil-smelling black smoke pour out, covering everything within



TOWERS AND GABLES AT FURNES



reach with black smut. Men and boys are busy unpacking marionettes from other wagons, and mechanics are setting up engines which are to turn the merry-go-rounds, for to-morrow is Feast Day. We had come here expressly to see the great religious "Procession of the Penitents," as it is called, which is not only a manifestation of the piety of Furnes, but is in part a retrospective review of the art of Flanders. M. Plettinck calls it "A picture of the Golden Age of Christianity," showing in procession the ardent and naïve piety of the people in an absolutely local character of formation, the antiquity of the costumes and the quaint and curious declaiming (*spraken*) figures depicting the various sacred personages. These recite certain rhymes in Flemish which, he says, have never been translated, and which, while possibly not of very great literary value, are of extreme originality. These sincere people, who walk for the most part masked and clad in rough brown Capuchin robes, becowled so that the head and features are entirely concealed, are real penitents. I saw these robes on the morning of the procession, piled in one of the aisles of the church, together with a heterogeneous mass of wax figures of various otherwise sacred and awful personages. These penitents, who sing or chant their lines in plaintive cadences, constitute one of the most re-

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markable spectacles of modern times, says M. Plettinck, and this is why we came to this out-of-the-way spot. Wandering through the dim aisles of the cathedral we saw a number of men carrying litters in from the sunlit square outside; on these litters were piled richly clad wax figures of the apostles, and these, lying on their backs or otherwise, their waxen hands stretched upwards towards the bearers somehow gave me a shocked feeling, but the townspeople seemed to see nothing out of the way in the proceeding. M. Plettinck disagrees with the popular belief concerning the origin of the festival or celebration, which has it that it is due to a sacrilege committed by two French soldiers of the garrison in 1650. He says it had already achieved recognition as a yearly performance as early as 1100 A. D., and gives his opinion credence by voluminous facts and figures. According to him, the Count Robert of Jerusalem, returning from the Crusade, was overtaken by a violent storm when approaching the coast, and made a vow to offer to the first church whose spire appeared a piece of the true cross which he carried. "Instantly," says the chronicle, "the sea calmed, and there before him was the tower of St. Walburge, the ancient church of Baldwin, Bras de Fer. Disembarking, he presented to the clergy of Furnes the precious relic, which became the

foundation of a brotherhood, and a fête perpetuating the happy event." Thus it happens that one of the groups shows Count Robert and his attendants. After years saw troubles upon the land and the fête lost some of its popularity, but the venerable Canon Jacques Clon of the Abbey of St. Nicolas and Sainte Walburge, reconstituted the brotherhood under the title of the "Sodalite." The popular belief is that the feast and procession is due to a heinous crime and sacrilege committed in 1650 by one Mannaert, aged 22, a soldier and a servant of Messire du Bosquel, influenced by the heresy and bad counsel of one of his comrades named Le June, who accomplished "an abominable crime" against the sacredness of the church, when at communion he took from the hands of the officiating priest the Holy Sacrament and after placing it in his mouth he secretly ejected it in his handkerchief and carried it to the garrison. There he "roasted" the morsel in the belief that by means of it he could obtain incredible power and render himself invulnerable. Filled with this belief he could not keep the secret, but confided in a comrade, who promptly notified the horrified authorities. He was seized and thrown into prison. The account says further that he was condemned, upon trial, to be publicly exhibited at every corner of the town with "his hands encased

in red hot iron gloves, thus serving as an example to posterity; following which he was publicly strangled and his body reduced to ashes."

On the morning of the great procession we were awakened in our great four-post, canopied bed in the "Nobele Rose" by unwonted bustle and noise in the street outside. The small "vicinal" train, which runs from the coast towns and villages through the streets on a ridiculously narrow set of rails set so close together as to seem toy-like and impossible, ran at shorter intervals,— the locomotive inside a car and concealed so as not to unduly startle the peasantry, and its bulging sides piled with "briquettes" of compressed coal dust and tar, which in combustion give off thick sulphurous clouds of peculiarly pungent and offensive black and yellow smoke, and deposit an oily black smut over everything in its path. It draws nine or ten diminutive carriages painted black, of first, second and third class, perched high up on thin spidery wheels. The engineer, with one hand on the throttle, uses the other to squeeze the rubber bulb of a brass horn of piercing note. I note that occasionally a machine passes with another arrangement whereby the engineer pushes down a knob before him which evidently forces air into some sort of chamber, and from this machine comes a hollow roar and groan which cannot fail to ac-

comply with its purpose. This engineer evidently is proud of his horn, for I note that he blows it whether anyone is in sight or not, more often the latter. I note that the door of the first-class carriage is fast shut, and that no one seemingly ever enters the lace-windowed door. I can see its red plush cushions inside and some gorgeous crimson tassels hang from the walls. The peasants quite fill the third-class carriages with their baskets and bundles of provisions for the day, for this is the one great day of the year for them. The procession of the "Sodality," it is called generally but sometimes they call it the "Great Penitence," in which the various scenes of the life of Christ, the Virgin and the Disciples are enacted before their very eyes. The streets are filled with those peasants, walking about seemingly without any purpose save that of "killing time," and the chairs before the drinking places extending out into the street are all occupied by them. The "Nobele Rose," too, is crowded by strangers, and madame is in a great state of excitement in consequence. Mynheer, too, appears from and disappears into the archway of the great cellars that lie beneath the house, where he has certain tuns and casks containing, he says with pride, "vintages of gerrande renown." Mynheer is somewhat of a linguist, I find, but when he is excited he speaks



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a mixture of French, German and English, which with the accompanying shrugs and gestures is amusing, if not always easy to understand. As for his consort, she is bustling about in the kitchen, where arrays of young white chickens are laid out on tables all ready for the broiling, while a "slavey" in the garden, with her sleeves rolled up, is washing crisp lettuce heads that make one's mouth water with thoughts of the dinner at mid-day.

Our room faces on the street through which the procession is to pass. Across the way, against the luminous gray sky rises the slender campanile of the town hall, gray and musty with age, and around it the swallows fly in clouds, perching at times upon the large gilded Lion of Flanders which surmounts its topmost pinnacle. At the right rises the ancient roofs and buttresses of St. Walburge; below are some mellow-tiled roofs of quaint two-story and one-story and attic houses, the windows of which are open and filled with strangers at two francs a head, for these are thrifty householders. The house opposite bears in iron ornamental "ancons," the date 1682, but to our satiated eyes, used to other and earlier dates in the town, this seemed quite modern and hardly worthy of remark. We find that our



THE GREAT PROCESSION OF THE SODALITÉ  
(Group showing the Saviour bearing the heavy oaken cross  
through the streets of Furnes, followed by penitents.—*From  
a poster by Verhoesel.*)



thrifty landlord has sold our windows twice if not thrice over, for soon enters madame with a voluble lady, her very "chic" daughter in a tremendous black hat, and a nurse and two children. "Do we mind?" she asks most wheedlingly! Of course we do not, why should we, indeed, since the windows are not too large at best, nor are there places where more than two can see comfortably. Of course we do not mind, we exclaim hypocritically, and with false smiles of welcome and inward rage, I give up my place to the immense black hat, whose wearer smiles bewitchingly her thanks and blocks the window. Madame, the mother, explains that she is the widow of a general, of whom, of course, I must have heard (what can I do but carry on my hypocrisy?), and that Mam'zelle is her "young" daughter. The black hat turns, wriggles, shrugs, and smiles, oh, so charmingly, and dabs her nose with a morsel of lace handkerchief; that the "petites" are not, of course, hers, but that she petted them in the train and brought them along to see the procession; here the "petites" wriggle, then yell for some reason, and, thank fortune, are removed elsewhere, kicking and still yelling out of our ken. Then there is a movement in the crowd below, the gen d'armes are forcing back the people towards the Grand' Place which is filled with the vans and

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booths of the coming kermesse. A drum beats, trumpets blow a fanfare, and at the top of the street (so the black hat says) appears a soldier on horseback followed by the first group of the cortége. Here, by a most cunning effort, I wedge my head between the hat brim of Mam'zelle, the daughter, and the window frame, and by a wonderful contortion succeed in seeing a tall banner of white, gold and red borne above a flashing mass of crimson and blue and the huge head of a Flemish horse. Mam'zelle saws at my neck with the hat brim but I am adamant of neck, and hold my vantage. Then below walks the first group of the pageant, bearing the standard of the Sodalite, on foot following an angel carrying a banner comes the figure of a penitent in coarse brown sacking, the hood over its head and concealing it, with holes for eyes and nose — six trumpeters (Thebaines) abreast blowing in union. Second group, the prophets, a young girl dressed in white, her hair down her back, her feet bare; she is speaking in Flemish, turning her head to the right and left; she speaks mechanically without gesture or any feeling, like an automaton. I got possession of a small pamphlet on coarse paper printed in Flemish giving the speeches of the angels, and the following is what she was supposed to commit to memory and recite. It sounds some-

thing like English when repeated, but in print it looks strangely.

“ Lofwaardig heilig volk, gij ware uitgelezen  
Door Gods geheimail raad, om van't getal te wezen,  
Van Christus ware kerk, zeel eens wat pijnen spot  
Hij net heeft uitgestean, als zijnde menschen God.”

and about thirty-five lines more of the same sort. Then follow the eight prophets, stolid-looking peasants in long gray gowns and bare feet, the first being Moses, who wore a heavy, bushy gray wig out of which stands gilded strips of metal representing rays, and bearing on his left arm the tablet of the law. Then David in a blond wig, buff gown and carrying a sort of lyre; then follow Isaiah, Jeremiah, Daniel, Osee, Zachariah and Malachi, each in turn speaking in a monotonous drone the words of his part. Each seems subdued in manner and most devout in his gestures to the multitude of peasants packed on each side of the roadway; these, too, seem stricken with awe as the figures pass, but the men do not remove their hats or make any comment whatsoever,— they simply stare as if spellbound at these “simulacri.” The women, on the contrary, cross themselves repeatedly and their lips move as if in prayer. Now appears a penitent clad in a coarse brown Capuchin-like robe; I judge that this is a woman, for the

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bare feet are small and turned outward, and the steps are short and timid as if the contact with the rough stones was painful, even the hands grasping the standard are concealed by the coarse sleeves and I fancy that I can see the eyes through the holes in the hood which covers and quite conceals her head. She bears the standard of David, the little book informs me, "Penitent met de opschrift de Kroon, den Scepter en het Zwaard van David"; behind her is another similarly clad, carrying a rude gilt crown, a scepter of carved gilded wood, and a wooden gilt sword. Then follow others, interspersed with young girls clad as angels, speaking (spreken) their parts, until at length appears Mary, a young girl in a white robe, before whom is a child leading a lamb, and then a figure representing Joseph, who carries a saw and hammer. Both Mary and Joseph are carrying on a dialogue addressed to the multitude and are followed by the herders or shepherds, who are named in my little book as Corydon, Tites, Menaecas and Orpheus. Follow these the three kings in quaint costume, one with face blackened with soot who is most earnest in his declamation; each bears gifts in appropriate form, and over each an attendant holds a sign bearing the name of Balthasar, Gasper and Melchior. A rough cart decked to represent a stable (but I cannot see into it), comes now into



view. Mary mounted on a small donkey, the flight into Egypt represented by a girl not more than twelve years carrying a small doll with Joseph at her side, accompanied by an angel who interprets the group as before. Then Herod and the four princes, followed by the young Christ among the elders (Doctoren); the Saviour is represented by a boy of about ten years, and wears a white gown open at the neck from which a crimson silk sash drapes his thin body. The boy speaks his lines with great dignity, and his gestures are singularly graceful and appropriate, so it seems to me. Then Mary Magdalen, walking barefoot, her hair falling about her, and dressed in a cheap satin robe. I recognize her as the girl who waits on the counter of a small drygoods shop on the Grand' Place. Now comes a rough wagon on which is mounted a platform with carved wooden figures most garishly painted and representing the Last Supper. The figures bob and sway with the motion of the wheels in a most comical manner, and I note that mounted in the very center of the table is a figure of the Virgin Mary, made only from the waist up and fastened to the table; it sways to and fro, its outstretched hand moving up and down over a morsel of bread. Then a penitent bearing a cushion upon which are thirty pieces of silver. My cramped position at



the window forces me to rest for awhile, and the black hat promptly fills the small space which I vacate. The noise of shuffling feet goes on outside, and the monotonous drone of the "angels" speaking their lines. Overhead the lambent, luminous sky is filled with piled-up masses of cumuli and the darker strata of cirri, which threaten rain, and, sure enough, some large drops fall, although the sun still shines. I do not remember to have heard the chimes from the town hall during the passage of the procession; it may be that they have been stopped temporarily.

Now the black hat moves slightly and, seizing the opportunity, I fill the space. Mam'zelle frowns, but what care I? I see three or more ranks of Roman soldiers in shining helmets with spears brandished, and among them *an unkempt, stooping figure dragging a huge oaken cross*. The figure moves painfully with slow halting steps, the head bowed low, the hair falling about and concealing the face, on the head entangled in the long brown hair is the crown of thorns. The cross is undoubtedly heavy. The hands grasping it are small and brown and the knuckles and sinews stand out in relief. The figure stumbles, falls — the soldiers prod it with their spears, and roughly, too! Painfully the figure rises under the heavy burden and again staggers on its way — Not a sign from the



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ON THE WAY TO MARKET





packed mass of peasants who stolidly line the way, — not a word nor exclamation, not the movement of a hand even. But it is not from lack of reverence; it is their way. They are stolid, like animals, accepting it all as the visible form of the great truth implanted in them, from birth almost, by the priests. To you or to me this is ghastly. To them it is the meat and drink of their existence, beyond which lies what? — A rude coffin draped with a black cloth, on the other side six tall wax candles standing before the altar in the cathedral. A priest and one or two acolytes clad in red and, while swinging censers, a chant, a peal from the organ above — A procession as far as the open doorway of the church, and then the coffin pushed into the hearse — A narrow furrow in the churchyard, and a prayer for his soul; for this he lives and this is all he craves.

Other groups followed, but I felt that I had seen enough of it; somehow, I did not want to see any more, but I could not leave the window, and stayed there to the end, and finally the attendant chorus of priests passed chanting sonorously, clad richly in all their ecclesiastical laces and silk, their embroidered banners borne aloft, and the horns and trumpets accompanying deep voices, and over all the, to me, noxious odor of the clouds of incense from the swinging censers carried by the

gorgeously clad acolytes. Then the crowds closed in, filling the narrow street, and the great procession of Furnes was over.

The nearby commune of Lombartzyde (sometimes spelt Lombaerdzyde) was formerly a very prosperous maritime town. The port situated on the river Yser was filled up with sand during terrible tempests in the years of 1116 and 1134. The inhabitants rebuilt on another branch of the river, passing the hamlet of Santhoven, and became so prosperous, that in 1160 the town received the name of Neoportus (Newtown), and the present Nieuport. It was fortified in 1163 and sustained, says the chronicle, nine sieges in the great wars that followed. Entirely destroyed by the "Gantois" and the English in 1383, it was reconstructed by the unconquerable Flemings, after the plan which may now be studied.

The chronicle says, "The town sustained numerous memorable sieges, that of 1489 against the French in which women and girls took up arms, and fought with such courage that they forced the besiegers to retire after ten successive assaults." In 1568 the famous fight called the "Battle of the Dunes" was fought between the Spanish commanded by Conde, and Turenne at the head of the French, resulting in the defeat of the latter. In 1600 Prince Maurice of Nassau, commanding the

Hollanders, defeated the Spanish army under the Archduke Albert. Every inch of ground here is of historic interest.

Almost entirely destroyed by the French in the years 1745, 1792 and 1794, the great fortifications were finally razed in 1862 and replaced by a boulevard. Situated in the dunes on the sea coast, the sad little town lies in the midst of sand hills, cut by profound valleys, in which are hundreds of the small, red-roofed cabins of the fisherfolk, embowered in the summer with vines and rose bushes, and the region is one of great beauty, known to artists who jealously guard the locality of the scenes which they love to transfer to canvas. Coming up the coast, vessels can see the lofty tower of the "Vuurboet" or lighthouse, built in 1284, rising above the yellow sand dunes.

In the town of Nieuport, a short distance from Furnes, we were struck by the long straight lines of the silent, deserted streets, in which are palaces and large forbidding-looking, many-windowed stone buildings of great antiquity. The Hotel de Ville contains artistic objects of interest and there is a collection of pictures. A Battle of Nieuport by Moritz, two volets attributed to Lancelot Blondel; portraits of Philippe II and his spouse, Marie of York; of Albert and Isabelle; of Philippe IV and his wife, and a museum of antiquities, ar-



chives and a library near the Hotel de Ville. A hoary ancient building is the old prison, giving a perfect idea of what constituted a donjon of the Middle Ages.

On the wide, deserted Grand' Place is situated the Halles with a curious roof and belfry in the Gothic style. The venerable Gothic Church of Notre Dame, consecrated in 1163, held us for more than an hour examining the Jubé, or screen, the magnificent pulpit in oak, the stalls in carved, dark-polished wood of some sort, and a collection of tumulus stones dating from the fifteenth century. The massive squat brick tower was never completed and in it is a carillon of singular sweetness, composed of forty bells. Over the portal is emblazoned in faded colors and gold the arms of the town. Not a soul was to be seen in the large square. Eastward outside the tower is the donjon or Tower of the Templars, the remains of an ancient convent of the brotherhood, which was destroyed by the English in 1383. Along a shaded, paved way, embowered by large trees, we found the church containing a miraculous statue of the Virgin, much venerated by the sailors and fishermen, the church hung with small, quaint models of fishing boats,—“*ex votos*” by those saved from the perils of the sea?

## *Tournai*

**T**OURNAI seemed to us to be a very large and thoroughly cosmopolitan city, instead of one of the dead towns of old Flanders; the really oldest in point of fact, for it dates from the Roman period, and is the scene of the last stand made by the Romans prior to their expulsion from the Netherlands, by the Franks. We were rather disappointed to see large shops and buildings which might have been seen anywhere else, say in Philadelphia, without attracting attention, but upon closer examination everything—buildings, shops, streets and people—seemed “down at heel.” The streets, while wide and fairly well paved, are very dirty; full of holes in places in which pools of malodorous water remains. The shops too are ill kept, the windows dirty and dim from want of attention, and the stock exposed therein not at all up to date, and

greatly inferior to Ghent. We saw but few people in the streets, as the bus in which we jolted along carried us to the hotel to which the guide book gave a high-sounding name and which was furthermore marked with a star. We saw on the way thither the imposing Grand' Place, with the immense, five-towered cathedral at one side and the slender spire of the Beffroi at the other. Between them are rows of fine-looking shops, but grass is growing among the cobblestones, and only a few black-cloaked women bearing baskets on their arms were in sight. The hotel is in a sad-looking building, over the door of which is a long flagstaff bearing a somewhat ragged flag of red and blue with a scalloped border, which hung dejectedly in the fine drizzle which was falling, and there is a large oval, faded picture of a noble lady in a ruff hanging beneath the center window as a sign. The entrance is up an alleyway through a door with a broken windowpane, and inside are various tables in disorder, with soiled dishes and rumped tablecloths. The clanging bell brought out a crippled boy who stupidly regarded us, and after him appeared a very old and unkempt manservant who gathered up our traps and luggage, and motioned us to follow him up a winding, dark stairway to a hallway above, from which doors opened into chambers all in disorder, in one of

which we had to sit while another was prepared for us. The old fellow was clerk, chambermaid, and man-of-all-work, and while making up the chamber kept up a running stream of talk, the purport of which we did not attempt to understand. Dinner at six o'clock was most disappointing, the food wretchedly cooked and served worse, by the ragged, crippled boy, and the details of this meal I am trying to forget.

We braved the drizzle outside and took our way towards the Grand' Place. A few scattered lamps were being lit, and in the shops no customers were to be seen as far as we could judge by looking through the doors. I asked of a passerby where were all the people, and without replying he gazed at me in amazement, and remained as if rooted to the pavement, staring at us as if convinced that we were both demented. The town seems very dead whether the people realize it or not; a town with the population of a village seemingly, although it is credited with 36,800 people; certainly we did not see even eight hundred of these during the two days of our stay. Tournai is said too to be much cleaner than the others in the neighborhood, but this I am prepared to dispute, for I have never seen a dirtier or a more foul smelling place, and I doubt if even the remarkable buildings or the great pictures, or the

marvels of the cathedral would ever tempt me to again go there. We walked through the silent streets down to the canal, then returned by a circular route to the hotel, meeting few people and feeling quite disappointed. When we entered and reached our room we heard the doors shut and the sound of bars and bolts being put in place, and thus night closed in upon us.

The morning dawned gray, and still inclining to rain with lowering skies overhead. I read from my note-book to A—— Ledeganck's lines which are certainly adapted to Tournai of to-day.

And I vouchsafed no comment upon them whatever, merely asking dryly —“What train shall we take after coffee?” I can only add that the coffee was worthy of the hotel, and that we did not drink it, contenting ourselves with the more or less stale rolls and some cheese which remained on the table from the night before. But hungry as we were, we could not resist the really magnificent antiquities which rewarded our search through the town, for in the arts, Tournai reigned supreme in past ages. Her sculptors enjoyed great repute, and in the fifteenth century the Flemish School boasted at its head the great Robert Canysin, Rogier de la Pasture (Vander Weyden), and Jacques Davet, three great masters, whose works are found in the principal museums of Europe. The taste of the

rich people of Tournai for art is well known, and products from its workshops, such as tapestry and metal working are preserved in the Cluny Museum. During the troubles of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries Tournai produced little in the way of art, but with the dawn of the eighteenth century came a renewal of vigor and activity, and in this period the production of porcelain (*pate tendre*) rivaled that of Sèvres and Saxe, and pieces for the table, vases, statuettes and busts, were wrought in great perfection which made them sought for by royalty. Napoleon ordered his carpets made here for the imperial palace, and the chiseled, gilded, bronze work of her artisans was known all over Europe.

Starting from the fine railway station, built after plans by Beycart in 1879, we explored the town carefully, passing the monument of "Bara" by the sculptor Charlier, and following the rue Childeric we found in the rue Barre St. Brice a fine "Manoir" of the sixteenth century, and farther on two venerable Roman houses, the most complete specimens of twelfth-century domestic architecture, it is said, in all Europe. No. 26 in the same street, a beautiful house of the fifteenth century, is entirely restored with great skill. Upon the façade of the house No. 8, is a placque recalling that here in 1653 was discovered the tomb

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of the French king, Childeric. The door was locked and no one responding to our ring at the bell, we did not gain access to it. Down the street by the Church of Saint Brice by the Rue de Pont, over the Pont aux Pommés, we come to the Ancient Hospital, so called and now the Academy of Beaux Arts, over which is the admirable tympan by LeCreux. We came upon a most curiously covered way called the "Fausse Porte," dated 1198, the remains of an immense construction of the Roman epoch. At the right is the house of the "Ancients Pretres," and at the end is the great Portal of the Cathedral of Notre Dame with its five towers dominating the town. The Church is one of the largest in Europe and can be seen from a great distance across the Flemish plains. Dating from the middle of the twelfth century, despite the many occasions upon which it has been a prey to the invader, it still contains priceless treasures. Its interior is very impressive with its lofty aisles, its columns, and its great dark marble Jubé, or screen, covered with statuary. We happened upon some kind of ceremony only participated in by high dignitaries of the Church, for behind this screen, we saw nearly two score of priests clad in gorgeous vestments, who were seated in the stalls, while three other priests officiated at the altar, or was it at one of the reading desks?



THE GREAT CATHEDRAL — TOURNAI







We could not see very plainly, from our hiding place behind the pillar. There was much chanting and an address by one, evidently a Bishop, and then at a signal they all filed slowly two by two through a passage at the right, disappearing into a small room, and the door closed upon them. We tiptoed along the side aisle and on returning, we came all at once upon the same priests now clad in black garments. One of them eyed us with evident disfavor, calling the others' attention to us, but we stood aside quietly until they had passed, then appeared a tall, grave, yet kindly-faced man, who regarded us keenly for an instant, then passed on. He turned once hesitatingly, I thought, then stopped at the door where there was a large bénitier of holy water, awaiting our approach. When we reached him he dipped his hand into the bénitier and raised it over us, motioning us to kneel. I am not a Roman Catholic but I saw no reason why we should not do as he wished, so we both knelt before him, upon the cold dark stones beneath which rested the bones of the Knights of Flanders, and he blest us, then opened the small gate in the great leather-covered door. I told him in French that we were travelers from America, at which he was greatly interested, asking questions, which we found somewhat difficult to answer, of the church in America, but he evidently

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knew that we were not of his faith, and this did not prevent him from making it easy for us to see the great treasures of the cathedral after which he bade us a courteous farewell. Upon his thumb he wore the great square-stoned ring of a Bishop, so that we felt that we had had a most unusual and interesting experience. A— was much more impressed with it all than I, but then she is so much more receptive. Before emerging from the cathedral we found ourselves before the Ancient Beffroi, the oldest in Flanders, in an attractive small square called the "Marche' aux Poteries." Passing again beneath the "Fausse Porte" before the Episcopal Palace, and following the Rue des Orferves. We saw the Ancient Palais des Etats Tournaises (1735) now the office of the Communal Archives. Here I studied some of the old maps of the region, watched by a suspicious old fellow in uniform who was convinced, I think, that I meant to steal everything or anything in sight. But a piece of silver placed in his shaking hand quite softened his suspicions, and thereafter I might have removed anything which I fancied, had I been so disposed.

Outside in the Grand' Place, the triangular form of which, I find by a map, is made by two ancient Roman roads meeting at the Beffroi, we took the right hand way and at the head of the



Rue de Cologne found the " Bassin d'or " an elegant construction of the seventeenth century. Midway is the Church of Saint Quentin, and at the left the ancient " Grange des dimes " of the Abbey of Saint Martin, now the Café des Brasseurs. At this point the aspect of the Tournaisian Forum is seen in all its originality. At the summit of the triangle on the right hand is the charming façade of the " Halle aux Draps " or Cloth Hall, now the Museum of Beaux Arts. In the center of the Square is the statue of Le Princesse d'Espinoy by Datrieux, a souvenir of the courageous resistance of the citizens against the attack of the Spanish troops under Farnese in 1581. But one always returns to the great cathedral " over one hundred and fifty yards long by seventy wide " because of its massiveness, its dignity, and its repose, recalling Gloucester, Norwich, or Ely in England; de Laon or de Soissons in France. In point of construction it has two styles; Roman in the nave and transept, and Gothic in the choir, which begun in 1242, was completed in 1325. The nave 33 *metres* in height, is composed of nine spuces of four ranks of arcades, the wooden ceiling replaced in 1777 that which was constructed during the Roman epoch. The decorations are very rich, and the massive columns capitulated with a variety of sculptured forms, contribute to the splendid ensemble of

the edifice. Above the "basses Neufs" are deep galleries reached by secret passages where noble ladies might sit and participate in the ceremonies without fear of observation. The transept, a chef d'oeuvre of Roman style, undoubtedly the most beautiful part of the cathedral, is terminated in a hemicycle. It measures some 66 meters in length, 14 in breadth and 35 in height (H. Hymans). At this junction with the nave is a massive work of columns, and above this is the lantern, 48 meters high corresponding to the central tower. The windows in the hemicycle are of very old painted glass, dating, the sacristan says, from 1465. All is bathed in a most delicate light, disclosing the beautiful sanctuary, the Jubé, a remarkable piece of work by Corneille de Vriendt (Floris d'anvers) constructed in 1572 above which hangs an immense crucifix gilded and carved. The towers are of different epochs, some Roman, others frankly Gothic, yet the effect is not strange because of the mixture.

The porch is light stone (*pierre blanche*) in Gothic arches surmounted by a tribune; it was constructed in the fifteenth century. It lacks something of elegance but protects a most curious series of high and low reliefs of different ages, the smaller of these, of Tournai blue stone, date from the fourteenth century and are of exquisite detail,

representing Adam and Eve, the Prophets, and the learned doctors of the Church. These have suffered much from the elements and from iconoclasts as well, but they still bear eloquent witness to the power of the artisans of Tournai. The second zone, in white stone, represents at the left a procession, at the right the history of King Childeric (sixteenth century). The higher zone shows in riches and statues of the Apostles. Among other sculptures the two bays of the porch are worthy of remark for the statue of the Madonna (fifteenth century) much mutilated by soldiers, repaired in 1620, and those of Saints Piat and Elenthere. The "Chasse de Notre Dame," at the right of the great altar, in Vermeil is the work of Nicolas de Verdun, who wrought it in 1205 and signed his name to it. In high relief it depicts scenes in the life of Christ, and is an object of great value and devotion to the townspeople. If the "Chasse de Elenthere" in silver gilt is not so old as the other just described, it is no less remarkable, and constitutes one of the most precious specimens of metal work of the Middle Ages. In form it is that of a sarcophagus surmounted by a dome of three embossed "pomes" richly enameled. At the two ends of the case are representations of Christ and Saint Elenthere; the last figure is particularly beautiful;

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the name of the artisan is unknown. The great altar formerly belonged to the Abbey of Saint Martin; it dates from 1727 and is the work one Gaspard Lefebvre of Tournai; garnished with medallions in repoussé silver it is of great beauty of detail. We noted in the choir, a massive lectern in hammered iron of the fifteenth century, and twelve immense Gothic chandeliers, all the work of the artisans of the town. Near the lateral doorways of the choirs are four statues in marble, Charity and Religion by Louis Wilemseus (1636-1702), Saints Piat and Elenthere carrying the cathedral, by Michael Vervoort (Antwerp 1667-1737). Elsewhere is the monument raised to the memory of the Bishops and canons of Tournai, and composed of fragments of ancient origin. In the center is the recumbent Statue of Maximilien Villain of Ghent. The Christ in the tomb is attributed to Pierrard, and the angels are said to be the work of Duquesnoy. (1650.)

There is a large "Purgatory" painted by Rubens, and a "Crucifixion" by Jordaens, both in the Chapel of Saint Louis; A Quentin Metsys; (attributed) a François Pourbus bearing the date of 1573, representing the Resurrection of Lazarus; and a Lancelot Blondel (?) Life of the Virgin, this is a most excellent piece of work, and a modern painting Healing the Blind, by Louis Gallait.



The sacristan showed us the Treasure which is very rich in rare objects such as the tapestries of Arras dated 1402, a magnificent ivory relique and cross of Byzantine workmanship, and a "diptique" in ivory (fifteenth century); all meriting most careful study.

There are many other churches in Tournai each of which might have been visited and enjoyed if conditions had been otherwise. I may mention Saint Quentin, Saint Piat, Saint Jacques, Sainte Mary Madeleine, Saint Nicolas and Saint Brice, each and all filled with beautiful painting, statuary, and metal work, but we will not detail them in this volume.

The sound of the sweet chime in the Beffroi drew us to the square before it. The Archives of the town state that in 1240 the Beffroi had long been finished. It possessed even then two guardians and a "range of bells." Historians say that its construction was probably commenced soon after the citizens were authorized by King Philippe Augustus of France "to place in a conspicuous and proper place, a tower which would serve the purposes of the town." (1188.) The gilded dragon which surmounts the pinnacle is said to be modern. With the exception of the two ancient bells, the "Banclocque" and the "Timbre," the others date from 1392. The tritons and the sirens



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in gilded copper above the four tourelles, are the work of one Wattier who made them in 1397 from designs by the painter Ichan Leclecque. The tower is architecturally elegant, and seen against the gray sky with the dark houses at its base forms a picture which lives in one's memory. In 1228, following a conflict of jurisdiction between the communes, the town was condemned to pay a fine, and this served to cover the cost of construction of a Cloth Hall, in which the burghers might expose for sale their manufacture of linen and such other stuffs. The Archives state that this hall was primitive in construction, of wood, and lasted until the great storm (1606) destroyed it. The magistrate of Tournai then determined to replace it with another of greater and grander proportions, built of stone, giving the details into the hands of a town architect, one Quentin Rate, who built the Hall aux Draps (now the Museum of Art) of blue stone, in the style of the second period of the Renaissance. This lasted until 1881 when in course of restoration it collapsed, and it was not until 1884 that the work was proceeded with in considerable taste. It now contains some paintings, and a collection of pottery and Roman bronzes, ivories, manuscripts, and such like objects which are all most interesting and well arranged. The principal hall is reserved for paintings, and here



are pictures by Hugo Van der Goes; a fine figure, Saint Donation, by Gossart; a Saint John preaching, recalling the Flemish "Primitifs"; an Equestrian portrait of Louis XIV by Lebrun; a portrait of the Bishop of Saint Albin, the only work of Hyacinth Rigand in Belgium, and among many others a notable painting by Gallait, "The Last Honors to the Counts of Egmont and Horn."

The most imposing specimen of Roman military architecture in Belgium is the great "Pont des Trous" which crosses the Scheldt at the lower part of the town. A massive high bridge of three pointed arches dominated at either end by square towers, that on the left being constructed before 1250, the other in 1304. Recalling somewhat the "Broel" in Courtrai, and the "Rabot" in Ghent, it is much older and more interesting to the antiquary. The semi-circular towers, flattened at the rear, are pieced in part to permit ingress and egress by the watchman. On the right side or bank of the river the tower commanding has been greatly restored. It contains a fine hall reached by a staircase in the hall, to which access is gained by a gateway towards the town. The niche above formerly contained a statue of the Virgin placed there in 1340, a souvenir of the protection accorded by her to the town in their struggle with the Anglo-Flemings. The Tours Marvis constitute, with

the Pont des Troues, the last vestiges of the great wall which formerly protected the town, and which was demolished in 1864. It is said that these towers were built in 1277, thus they have survived for six centuries. The Tower called Henry VIII was erected in 1513 by that English Monarch and his ally Maximilian of Austria, in their combined attack upon Tournai, which for more than three hundred years had been loyal to France. The great circular tower is a unique and formidable vestige of the citadel, and comprises two circular halls superimposed, and lighted by a round aperture at its summit. Its diameter measures 25 meters, and the massive walls are more than six meters in thickness at the base. It was now afternoon, and we had eaten practically nothing save the stale rolls in that wretched hotel so we ordered the carriage to return to it, to gather our belongings and depart by the three-ten train. The light drizzle was still falling from the heavy-laden clouds, and the streets were as deserted as upon our arrival. The dilapidated old man of all work received us at the door with the broken pane; a soiled towel hanging from his arm, and dejectedly nodded when I asked for our bill, which after what seemed an interminable wait, he produced glumly. It was, as I had expected, excessive, we being the only so-called guests, but I paid it with-

out protest, and having retained the carriage, we bundled our belongings into it and drove away. I had not expected to tip the glum old fellow, but at the last moment, I weakened and gave him a piece of silver at which he eagerly snatched, then to my astonishment he said, looking about him suspiciously, "I am sorry M'sieur, I am sorry, but it isn't my fault, if you will believe me." And so we drove away in the rain, a large, fierce-looking, black dog with hanging jowls and open, foam-flecked mouth running along beside the carriage, as we clattered and jolted down the rather steep hill, over the bridge canal, and through the ill-paved street to the station. I noted in passing the means they employ here to tow the boats along the canal. Six or more horses, and sometimes men, are harnessed to long ropes diverging from the top of the mast. They tell me that a better leverage is attained in this fashion than if the line was attached to bits as with us. Once I saw some women and girls harnessed to the ferry tow-line pulling a heavy barge, while a lazy fellow in a red shirt sat on the tiller smoking, but this excited no comment whatever among the passersby who witnessed it, so I presume it is no uncommon sight here. At the station, I showed my "Billets Circulaires" to the old soldier who guarded the door, and we were admitted, after a general scrutiny, to

the platform. Our train was on time, and soon we were stowed away in a second-class carriage already occupied by a priest who was mumbling over his breviary. After he had pocketed the sacred volume, and had taken some snuff we conversed together. He scattered the snuff over himself and the seat impartially. He was a strange, dull-looking, tallow-faced being. After we had contemplated each other fully, and taken each other's bearings I ventured to ask him questions. He told me that he was a native of Bruges, but resided at Ghent, and he lamented with a tender air of melancholy that was ludicrous, the fact that there was so much unbelief nowadays. He told me also that he received about five hundred francs per annum as salary, but that some priests got as high as two thousand, besides what they received from masses, marriages and so on. He did not say how much this might be. He told me, too, that there are only three bishoprics. The rest of the country is governed by Vicars-general, who, in case any scandal should occur among the clergy, which we both agreed to be impossible of course, have the power of punishing it. He listened with surprise and delight mixed with envy, to my account of the revenues of the clergy in America, and remarked with a sigh that they certainly were magnificently paid, as they should be, since Protestant

clergy marry and, he added after a pause,— enjoy, life; that in Flanders people are strictly enjoined to fast on Friday and Saturday, but could not be punished for neglecting this duty; that there was plenty of good fish to be had. He asked if in our country butter was not forbidden in Lent? I told him that in America the clergy wear round hats; at this he seemed scandalized. He wore on his own large head a long shovel-shaped felt construction tied up at the sides with shoe strings. Immediately after this he relapsed into his breviary,— the passages of which he marked with his large flat thumb tipped with a misshapen, ill-kept nail. We were passing through a picturesque country planted with many pollards and long lines of poplars interrupted by straight canals and tall, weather-beaten brick windmills. The drizzle had ceased as we drew up to the station of our destination, and we were pleased with a gray tower or two which showed their bulbous tops above the red-tiled roofs of the small houses. Here the priest bade us a courteous adieu and I presented him with a bundle of the latest Antwerp papers which seemed to please him greatly.

## *Douai and Lille*

**T**HIS "most charming and modest town" is famed for the exploits of the "Giant Gayant" of the fifteenth century, a character whose history is obscured in mist and is most delightfully vague. Of the height of thirty feet; wearing a colossal casque (or helmet) encased in iron, he promenaded the roads looking for trouble, shield on arm, lance in hand. Here yearly on one of the first Sundays in July, a great procession and fête in his honor is held, in which the townspeople vie with one another. There are bands of music in the streets; the houses are hung with flags and banners; and the Giant accompanied by his wife, both clad respectively in rich armor and vestments, and leading their children, named Mlle. Fillion, M. Jacquot and the baby (ch'tiot Bimbin). All of heroic size, of course, hand in hand, they parade the streets to the delight of the inhabitants. This

joyous procession, the chronicles explain celebrates the departure of the troops of Louis XI after a vain attempt to conquer the town. I had heard this celebration described so enthusiastically, that I endeavored to find out the exact date, that I might see it for myself, but strange to say, no one in Antwerp apparently knew anything about it, nor cared for that matter. "Douai!" exclaimed such as I asked for information, "Douai!" why should anyone wish to go to that dismal town? There is nothing there, no casino, no theater, nor cafés nor amusements of any sort. Why does not M'sieur go to Ostende, or Blankenberghe? There one can find distractions, but "Douai!" Here Antoine uplifts hands and shoulders as if the words failed to specify the remoteness, the loneliness of this town. And so it happened that I was a week too late to witness this most picturesque spectacle. When we arrived the fête was over; the mountebanks were packing up their traps; the merry-go-rounds were being taken down and the peasants had all departed to their farms in the surrounding country, so that I was only able to gain admittance to the storeroom where the Giant and his family leant against the wall in dejected attitudes as if weary of their round of gayety. The figures are undeniably curious, but not, let me say, worth a journey to see. The town is, however, suffi-



ciently interesting for its own sake, and the inn we found comfortable with delightful linen on the beds and a degree of cleanliness all unlooked for, yet most welcome. The children throughout Flanders are pests, and lest I should be thought ill-natured I must explain that everywhere when I attempted to make a sketch in the streets I was surrounded by them. They have a curious habit, the reason of which I could not fathom, of arranging themselves in two long lines before me, one of boys and the other of girls, leaving a narrow passage through which I might view my subject, and when I looked up they followed my glance and when I looked down they did likewise, and this so got on my nerves that to-day I gave it up and fled, with the whole mob at my heels. All my efforts to shake them off were futile; they were not noisy, on the contrary, they were exceedingly quiet and well-behaved, save for their maddening persistence. I wonder if other painters have suffered in this manner. There is little or no use in applying to the police for aid against them, for either they cannot or will not understand that one should not be annoyed by on-lookers when painting. It may be that I will be thought ill-natured because I find fault in this way, I hope not, for I have put up with most exasperating interruptions on the part



of unthinking people when I have been at work, and often I have marveled at my own self-control.

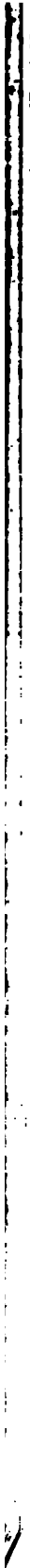
In the Middle Ages Douai was an important factor in the commerce and prosperity of Flanders. The seat of a university since the sixteenth century, and a fortified town under the watchful eye of Vauban. It was also the seat of the Flemish Parliament in the eighteenth century. The university remains and its present industry is fast restoring its shattered fortunes. The appearance of the town is prosperous, and some of the streets are quite modern if banal so to say, but there are here and there houses and old walls which quite compensate one for the glaring newness of certain of the constructions. Some of them of the early eighteenth century, rococo style, and while I cannot say that I am fond of rococo, still I can see merit and picturesqueness in it when it is consistent. The Hotel de Ville is Gothic, and superbly so, and compares favorably with the most celebrated edifices of Flanders. One pauses before this admirable façade in wonder at the craftsmanship displayed to such advantage, such is the beauty of the proportions and the remarkable tower against the sky; its beautiful windows; its two entrances with triple doorways; its pinnacles, and its turrets with their gilded "flèches." Over

all is the steeple towering upwards and of really indescribable architecture. My drawing must eke out my scanty vocabulary and show all I would like to put into words. This tower is of the fourteenth century with high and very large windows, and the steeple as I have called it, for want of a better term, is of wood, octagonal, in four or five stages ornamented with what the French call "lucarnes" small pent houses or gables over the windows, in which one can make out the faint outlines or masses of the bells. Each of these little pent houses is ornamented with a gilded iron "flèche" and topping the whole construction is a large gilded "Lion of Flanders."

On the Place d'Armes, near the Hotel de Ville is the famous house called the "Dauphin" and famed as the most beautiful façade of the eighteenth century now left in the town. Raised before the tiled roof is a sort of construction, all convolutions and curlycues of most extravagant form, with a cartouche in the center over two floors or stages of windows framed by pilasters and a richly wrought balcony of hammered iron. It seems to me a trifle too fantastic, but I enjoyed it as part of the exploration of the town. I find that my sense of enjoyment is not in the least impaired by all the richness of detail of these buildings, and I wonder at it, for I had fancied that



THE TOWN-HALL — DOUAI



after seeing a few of these wonderful town halls, and belfrys that I would be satiated, and become, so to speak, blasé, but happy am I that such is not the case, and I can return each day filled with enthusiasm to the study and enjoyment of these vestiges of the golden period of the Netherlands.

Of the Renaissance style, Douai has not much to boast of. There is but one house, that called the "Maison du Remy" with a high gable, much windowed, and three floors heavily colonnaded with lions' heads "corbelled" and some masques framed by lovely cartouches all worth drawing because of their purity of style.

An ancient portal fortified by brick towers and old weather-beaten roofs is all that remains of the ancient "Abbaye" of the convent, but Douai is lacking in remarkable churches. There is Saint Pierre, and Notre Dame of the Gothic period, but entirely wanting in style or interest and crowned by a steeple of little character. But we wandered about sufficiently pleased with what we found in the little town, where we had no experiences of any sort to chronicle, and this is somewhat strange for in all the others there was always some happening or other which served to mark the town, or differentiate it from the others. The people seemed stupid and uninteresting to the last degree, and even the dogs we saw did not run out

at us as usual, but seemed overcome with the sleepiness and inertia which lay over all. Here, certainly, time moves slowly, and little transpires to mark its coming or going.

Under the trees in the square near Notre Dame, is the statue of unfortunate Marceline Valmore "whose soul trembles in the sorrow of his delicious verse," as a French writer has said. I doubt, however, if the inhabitants of the town either appreciate or care much for his writings, for when I asked at luncheon at the table d'hôte of my vis-à-vis, a pallid-faced, large Flemish woman, whose nails, by the way, were outlined in black, where I could purchase a volume of his poems, she evidently had never even heard of him. I studied this lady very closely as a type of Flemish woman of the middle class. I do not say that she was worth the trouble. Laden with jewelry and expensively dressed in ill-chosen clothes she ate her luncheon with such a stolid air, that I could think of nothing but a fair, fat, moolley cow chewing her cud contentedly in the meadow and as I said as much to A —, she in the kindness of her heart endeavored to find some excuse for her. I was, moreover, non-plused at the immense quantities of cheese she ate, and then washed it all down with a prodigious mug of the thin sour beer of the coun-

try—"Uitzet," they call it. Then with a sigh she looked about the table to see if she had missed anything, by chance. The large dish of plums and grapes before her was the only one unemptied, so with another sigh she took a huge bunch of the large black grapes, so plentiful hereabouts, reminding one of the Black Hamburg. This bunch must have weighed a pound and a half and this she finished in an incredibly short space of time. Unable to stand any more, I ordered our coffee served outside and we both fled from the room.

Leaving Douai, we sped northwards to Lille which the Flemish call "Ryssel," formerly the capital of Flanders. At first sight Lille looks like any other large uninteresting town, its streets filled with people, bright with shops and full of bustle of electric tramways, and it is only by research that one finds the vestiges of bygone ages. There are long business streets, avenues and boulevards and quarters entirely given up to factories and the town is fast swallowing the small villages that surround it, filling the air with the black smoke of the battle of industry. In the town one finds great modern buildings such as the "Beaux Arts" a large Renaissance construction resembling the château of Chantilly somewhat, in which



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are various collections, and schools such as the Pasteur Institute, the "Ecole des Arts et Metiers" and such.

In the heart of the town is the noble Grand' Place, very modern of course, but conserving several ancient monuments and some façades with most interesting lines, which frame in the ancient gathering place of the burghers, the Hotel de Ville, the ancient "Grande 'Garde," the Bourse, and the fine column erected in memory of the great siege of 1792. The Hotel de Ville is at once the oldest and youngest of these old monuments; it dates only from the reign of Louis Philippe, and if one only penetrates the court, to the rear there one will find the remains of the ancient Hotel de Rihour, the palace and stronghold of the counts of Flanders. A tower of brick, two high gables, and high windows which light the Gothic hall called the "conclave." In these walls resided the great powerful counts of the house of Burgundy, those of the brilliant epoch during the fifteenth century, that period of golden prosperity of Flanders, after the terrible struggles and devastating wars of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries between the Kings of France and the Dukes. Facing the Hotel de Ville, the Bourse presents a picturesque appearance. A fine, square edifice of the seventeenth cen-

ture in the Flemish Renaissance style of which the façade in two stones is ornamented with columns and decorated with caryatides. The whole is quite satisfying, excepting that the tower is too small and thin for the building, and the chimneys equally too large. Inside is an arcade in which a statue of Napoleon I dominates an array of busts of scholars and illustrious citizens. My visit to Lille is memorable from the fact that I wore a pair of tight, brown leather shoes that gave so much trouble, that we sought a shoe shop off the Grand' Place where we were waited on by a sweet-faced girl who was all sympathy for my feet and knelt before me, taking my foot in her lap, all the while uttering little cooing noises which quite convulsed A — and embarrassed me greatly. I was for getting up, but this young girl would not hear of it until she had unlaced both shoes, and fitted my aching feet. She brought me a pair of roughly made shoes, which, however, fitted me well, and ahl the relief. I paid twenty francs for them, and gladly would I have paid it twice over, such had been my discomfort. By this time I had gotten over my embarrassment, too, and she told us where to get the best accommodation. I presented her with the brown, accursed leather shoes, at which she courtesied prettily and said, "I will give them to my brother when he comes home

from his voyage," and then she blushed so sweetly, that we both suspected that it was no brother for whom she intended them, but I wished him joy of them whoever he may be. The town has upwards of 210,000 inhabitants and was awarded to France by the Peace of Utrecht in 1713; is a fortress of the first class, according to authorities, and is situated on the river Deule. Since 1848 there have been many very extensive improvements in the town, the old fortifications have been obliterated, new ones replacing them, and so Lille with its boulevards and handsome avenues has become an important manufacturing center furnishing such staples as linen, woolen and cotton cloth, the so-called "Lisle" thread, sugar, oil and various chemicals. The only buildings of any importance which escaped the terrible wars of the Middle Ages are the ancient "Porte de Pans," formerly part of the old fortifications and in the form of a sort of triumphal arch, dating from the sixteenth century, and the late Gothic church of St. Maurice of the thirteenth century.

Returning to the Grand' Place (where the commemorative column was erected to the memory of the martyrs of the Siege of 1792 — the last, by the way, which this old Flemish town had to undergo — against a powerful Austrian Army of more than thirty-five thousand soldiers, and against

which she so gallantly defended herself, thanks to the famous "Cannoniers Bourgeois" an old and very celebrated company of the "Confrère of Sainte Barbe"), I was inspired to inspect the archives, and by the kindness of the librarian I was furnished with a very fair understanding of the siege. It seems that the attack lasted nine days and nights, and following the first bombardment the town took fire in numerous places and many houses were destroyed. I read of many deeds of heroism, so many indeed that, as the librarian said, if the town erected on the market places, statues or columns to each and all who deserved the honor, "there would be no room to walk." Taking only the history of the time of the unlucky Count Ferrand, we find the King of France besieging and taking the town on three separate occasions, and on the third time in order to finish their "exasperating obstinacy" he burned and sacked the place, leaving hardly more than a pile of ruins. But to show how unconquerable were these burghers, one hundred years later we find Philippe le Bel besieging the unfortunate town, and this only a short time after the terrible defeat on the field of the Golden Spurs (Esperons d'or). In 1667 Louis XIV in person conducted a siege against the stout walls of this ancient town, which had only twenty-four hundred sol-

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diers in the garrison and eighteen companies of "Bourgeoises," but after ten days "there was honorable capitulation and documents were signed maintaining the rights and privileges of the citizens who vowed their loyalty and faithfulness to the King." Under the plans of Vauban the town was transformed into a citadel of greatest strength. This citadel of Vauban became the object of attack of the generals of the wars of the succession of Spain, of Prince Eugene and also of Marlborough. Siege followed siege, Boufflers the Valiant defended the walls "to death" (as the account states) and after enduring famine and pestilence, "he retired within the citadel, and for two months longer, amid the boom of cannon, and beneath showers of leaden bullets, and stone balls, day and night managed to maintain his resistance with the loyal help of his brave Lillois." The story is a most moving one, and well worth reading. Indeed, the farther one searches into the history of these Flemings, the more wonderful and inspiring it becomes.

Of the ramparts of the so-called first period, only the base of the "Notable Tower" near the church of Saint Saveur now remains, but in spite of the alterations and modernizing march of events the great citadel of Vauban is still there,

and the student of history will do well to visit and study the spot.

## HET TOREN

I find it very difficult to get away from these old towns once I am settled in a comfortable place, and really, almost all of them can boast of very comfortable inns, with good beds all canopied with linen, albeit they are somewhat high and feathery. Huge dinners are served in the middle of the day at which there is generally gathered a motley assembly of officers, lawyers and "commis voyageurs," all as a rule in great good humor with themselves and the world at large, that is to say the small world which they know, for your Fleming is a great home body and rarely considers events beyond the borders of his own flat country. After dinner one takes coffee outside the inn on the railed-off space of sidewalk, for here people walk in the street, the sidewalks being private property and this space before the inn is furnished with small gaudy tables and iron chairs half hidden behind little trees growing in painted wooden tubs, where one may study the lines of the old cathedral tower from which the three riders from Ghent in the poem heard the boom of the bell which encouraged them.

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Here one sits studying the peasantry as they pass, with open, rather flat, honest, shrewd faces such as Hals painted. At the opposite end of the deserted square a small fussy train of toy-like black cars appeared and departed at intervals, leaving volumes of heavy black smoke behind them from which descended showers of smut, the bane of the thrifty consort of the innkeeper. I wondered idly, why, and where it went, there seemed so little reason for it. As far as I could see no one got in or out of it. Mynheer says it takes the peasants and their vegetables to and from their farms throughout the region and that for "sigs pens" I could go — here he made a wide sweep of his fat hands, as if to say to the farthest bounds of the earth, and seemed surprised and disappointed that I did not become at once enthusiastically interested. More than, to please him than myself, I asked further questions, and he instantly brightened, telling me that there were great things to be seen on one of these trips by the "vicinal," as these small trains are called; that there were most interesting villages among the dunes where I might find good subjects to sketch, such as old towers, and fishermen, who rode out into the surf on horseback to fish; and if I did not care for such, there was a ruined Abbey of great antiquity where there was a ghost or more prop-

erly, two ghosts of beautiful young princesses of long ago, with long streaming hair and jeweled hands who watched and watched for someone or something which never came. The Abbey had been the property of a cruel Prince, Bishop of a time so long ago that all idea of the date was lost, but, mark you, Mynheer, it was not later than the fifteenth century. Only one tower now remained and that was named "Vlaamsche Toren" or "Toren op t'Toren," that is Tower on the Tower, and the whole ruin was behind a sand hill quite overgrown with heavy trees which nearly concealed it and surrounded by a deep moat filled with black water. "A terrible place, Mynheer, but interesting." If I took the toy train as far as Zwalluwe and then crossed the sand dunes keeping the tower of the distant cathedral to the right I could not fail to find it after a good half hour's walk. A — and I talked it over when I went up to her, and we made up our minds to explore it after the siesta, for bear in mind that after dinner Flanders becomes dormant for an hour or so during which period the streets are more than ever deserted, and one hears little save the cooing of pigeons on the roof tops and the jangle of bells in the tower. A fine drizzle dripped from the low-hanging clouds and there was nothing for us to do but enjoy the siesta, so very soon quiet was over all. . . .



The toy train puffed into the square, the broad red band on its front reflected in the wet stones of the roadway. A —— and I clambered into one of the small black carriages marked "II Klasse" and the conductor, a young-old man or an old-young man I could not tell which, armed with a tin dipper thing with a cover pierced by an oblong slit sold me two tickets for one franc which he directed me to drop in the dipper. After he had punched the tickets with a great and entirely unnecessary show of force, he gave me a valuable set of directions in the Flemish tongue, eyeing me sternly the while so that I became quite meek and inclined to be almost apologetic under his gaze. Then the engine driver squeezed the rubber bulb of a large horn waking the echoes in the quiet square; the fireman shoveled in some large square blocks of tar and coal dust, and amid a cloud of evil-smelling smoke we puffed away, out of the town along straight roads bordered with tall slender *Hobbenia*, like trees, across the placid Flemish landscape. After we had proceeded thus for a good half hour the train slowed up, rounded a curve and stopped all at once, whereupon the old-young man with a great show of indignation insisted that we get out, which being accomplished, he motioned to the driver who pressed the horn into a furious blast, and away went the little train

leaving us in the road, with level fields stretching away to the horizon on either hand, with here and there the red-tiled roof of a farmhouse showing amid the willow trees. I had gathered from the conductor's vehement remarks that there would be another train in an hour's time. Then down came the rain and the roadway filled with pools of water. Through the misty screen of rain I made out a house across the field and after some effort we found the way to it through a lane and there we had shelter. Although I do not generally object to rain, I did find things rather dreary, and the house smelled musty and of stale tobacco, which was not strange, for every village house or so in Flanders in an estaminet licensed to keep and sell drink and tobacco. The floor was clean and sandy, and an incredibly old and bent woman in a lace cap gave us hot coffee and what she called "Cognac Fine" the only two French words she knew, by the way, and these were neither of them descriptive of the article. A — was cold and wet, and I was wet and cold, but I would see the "Toren" for which I had come and which the old woman said was just across the field ahead. She piled coal into the curious iron cylinder stove which projected into the room on stilt-like legs, its horizontal, flat chimney-pipe decked with brass and copper pots, and soon a pleasant warm glow

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rewarded the room while outside the rain dripped — dripped — musically,—“ the drumming fingers of the rain ” as the poet describes it — and so we sat and dozed while the clock ticked loudly, and the old woman sat knitting in the corner by the deep window in which bloomed scarlet geraniums.

Outside the wind blew the low-lying clouds from the northwest and piled them so that they took on huge forms of giants and vague animals. Then the sun shone over the fields, and the red tiles sparkled beneath it, and in the mist at the horizon light clouds against the darker ones were like the foam on the sea shore. Against these the distant towers and spires were luminous as old porcelain. When I reached the summit of the sand dunes through thickets of wiry, gray-green grass not a soul was in sight, but suddenly there appeared before me two young girls strangely clad, sitting quietly in the sun. I'll swear that they were not there a moment before when I ascended the hill, nor could they have approached without my seeing them. They did not look at me nor seem to know that I was there, so I turned and skirted the dune below them, climbing the one beyond toward the sea, and so I gained the top, panting. There before me were the two girls sitting in the same posture as before, their hands clasped idly in

their laps, staring away across the dunes. I was so startled that I exclaimed aloud, and to cover it, I said, "Can you direct me to 'Toren op Toren'?" "Oh, Het Toren?" said she whom I took for the elder of the two. She rose and came toward me, and pointing out the direction around the dune, said, "Climb the dune at the angle then go down until you come to the willow at the end where the grass lies thick at the edge of the sand. Cross over there and make a line between the willow clumps, that is the old road, follow it and you will come to 'Het Toren — but mind the fosse?'" I thanked her in my best Flemish and she answered me rather carelessly I thought, "Oh, we often show the way, but my sister is better at the directions than I." I set off down the dune through the shifting sand and upon reaching the bottom looked back — the two girls were nowhere to be seen, but just ahead of me I was amazed to see them walking quietly at the edge of the sand where the grass grows green and thick, and as I gazed at them with wide-open, astonished eyes they vanished into the thick green of the willows which bordered the field. I was completely mystified by this, and involuntarily looked back at the crest of the dune where I had left them but a moment before, and then acting upon an impulse, I half ran, stumbling along the edge of the shifting coarse

sand to the spot where the two girls had disappeared, my feet catching in the rough tufts of tall, wiry, grayish-green grass exposed to the roots here and there where the wind had blown the sand away. When I gained the clumps of willows fringing the deep ditch I soon found the small bridge of rotting planks crossing it, and dodging beneath the twisted branches growing bush-like from the gnarled trunks, I found myself in a gloomy sort of lane damp with moisture and slippery to the feet. Pursuing this and half running, I knew not why, I gained the open to find before me a long, straight, narrow path between two deep ditches, half concealed by tall rushes, and beyond, masked by a thick growth of trees, a stone tower and some crumbling walls. I fancied that I saw a flutter of white or gray for an instant among these trees, but I could not be sure, and when I reached the spot, I found a narrow but seemingly deep fosse of black-looking, stagnant water, overgrown here and there with a bright, greenish, ghastly-looking water plant resembling scum. Opposite was an opening in the wall where had once been a door or gate. This was evidently the portal of the tower but the small bridge over the fosse had rotted away, only the stumps of the posts remaining, and two long slits in the masonry at either side showing where the chains of the bridge

had once raised and lowered it. Without hesitation I leaped the fosse, landing without slipping upon the opposite bank, and entered the gateway, where piles of crumbled masonry and large stones littered the court, and the walls showed here and there protruding stones and holes, where the beams of the flooring had once rested. I was in a sort of courtyard at the right hand of which stood the tower. Behind me a stone dropped heavily in the grass, and turning I saw in the entrance through which I had come the two girls. One had her face turned away from me as before, the other motioned me on to the door in the tower. "There," said she, "stands Het Toren, that was what Mynheer wanted was it not? The view is fine from its top, and the crypt, ah, the crypt, that is best of all — and the well — do not fail to go to the well, Mynheer — enter, pass to the right, then the passage to the left, then down the steps — the boy will show you, Mynheer," she said, pointing behind me. I turned and there in the tower doorway stood a small peasant boy with a long pole in his hand. I then looked again, the two girls were not there; I went to the gateway but they were nowhere to be seen; the plain was empty before me to the very edge of the dunes. This was certainly extraordinary. I entered the court once more and accosted the boy who stood as before watching

me. A very ordinary little boy of eleven years or so, in a blue blouse reaching to the calves of his sturdy legs and wooden shoes.

"Show me the well in the crypt," I said. He nodded and led the way.

At the side of the tower twenty or so rude steps led downward into a black chasm. I descended them carefully but my nerves were on edge. I found they did not end in a level but continued to an unknown distance. Apparently they had not recently been explored for the blackness was crossed in all directions by what looked and felt like cobwebs. I thrust at them with a stick I had picked up at the top of the steps, to clean them away before descending further, when suddenly I knew that what I had thought web-covered water was black water. Then I fancied that what I thought steps must be reflection of those above, but when I pounded at them with the stick I found that they were solid and continued downwards under the black surface. Thoroughly startled, I retreated up the steps and irritably asked the boy why he had not told me of the danger. He did not answer but stolidly stared at me.

"What is that pool into which the steps descend," I said.

"It's a well, Mynheer," he said, dully.

"Where do those steps lead?" I asked.

"It went dry last summer and I went down with a candle."

"And then?"

"Twelve steps I went down, Mynheer, and there was a door where I could hardly get through, then there was a large room where you could stand upright and touch the ceiling in the center — there were columns so wide," he measured off a space with his pole. He spoke lower and lower and more slowly, "and there the steps went on — on — down."

"Well, and then?"

"I went no further, Mynheer," he said, with trembling lips.

"Tell me," I said, "who are the two girls I saw at the entrance a moment ago?"

He looked about him fearfully and with wandering eyes, then turned away from me and pointing out the gateway said, "There, Mynheer, is the way out."

I grasped him by his thin arm and shook him angrily.

"Tell me at once who are those girls?"

"There are no girls at Het Toren, Mynheer," he whimpered, yet faced me steadily. "No one has come here to-day but Mynheer, Als t'u Blijft (if you please)."

All at once I felt my arm shaken and a voice in




my ear, a voice I knew well, saying, "George, George," and I opened my eyes to the low-ceiled room with the sanded floor and the funny stove projecting from the wall with its flat pipe covered with brass and copper pots and kettles, to find A — at my side laughing and bidding me to wake, that the rain had ceased and that it was time to go back. I had peacefully dosed away in the little hut on the edge of the dunes and Het Toren was still to be explored, but not upon that day.

## *Bruges and Damme*

WHEN I was in Bruges in my student days, I lived at the "Panier d'or" in the Grand' Place, where the green grass grew between the cobblestones and three Flemish workmen dozed among the piles of hewn stones which were one day to be part and parcel of the new Municipal Building opposite under the shadow of the Belfry. Every morning, these three, who were said to be masons, reported for work at seven o'clock and after laboriously unpacking their kits and laying them out ostentatiously, would begin arguments which called for a tremendous effort in gesticulations and expletives, after which they would apparently fall into trances, trowel in hand, until the chimes rang out half-past nine, striking ten by the way, after the delightful manner of Flemish clocks, which always strike the following full hour for the half.

So that when it struck one, for example, and followed it by a sweet jangle, we knew it to be half-past twelve, and so on quite inconsequently. At half-past nine, then, these master masons would awaken from the trance, and laying aside their tools would betake themselves to a sheltered spot among the piles of stones, and there unpack a luncheon of bread, cheese and a big black bottle of wine, which consumed, they would peacefully fold their hands over their blouses and drop off into a dreamless sleep. So they passed day after day throughout the summer and there were no intrusive inspectors or others to disturb them. The Panier d'or was well kept in those days by a placid-faced vrouwe and her husband, who gave good food and shelter for francs, five and fifty centimes "par Jour, vous Comprenez sans café." An occasional French or English painter came that way and tarried long enough to fill his sketch book, and no longer. An unbroken calm was over the ancient town and when the beggars had grown to know one as an artist, they ceased from troubling, recognizing a neutral or maybe a brotherly attitude toward art, and respectfully saluted as one passed to and fro along the silent canals. But now . . . what a change one finds in ancient Bruges. No more grows the green grass between the stones of the Grand' Place. The

Municipal Building on the square is finished. A large, imposing modern statue adorns the "Place" before the ancient Belfry. The clock face has been newly gilded. New shops, whose doorways are sheltered beneath heavy, bright, canvas awnings adorn the sides of the "Place," and the streets so silent of yore resound with the hurrying feet of the tourist. Bruges, the silent, is now no more. So that I consider Bruges to be quite vulgarized. I look back upon the long summer days of my former visits with a keen pleasure, when I had only a curious boy or girl who followed at my heels begging the "sous" which they well knew they were sure to get. To meet with these pests on silent, moss-grown streets, whose stones reverberated with my footsteps, was not unusual, and these I could soon put to flight by a small show of generosity, and then be left to my reflections and the enjoyment of the gables of the somber palaces reflected in the canals, and the misty, gray bulk of the Belfry tower against the luminous sky, or I might, without exciting wonder or comment, hail a boatman sculling below me in the sluggish water, and invite myself successfully to go with him wherever he was bound. Or I might betake myself to the Grand' Place and entering the dark portal of that venerable pile well loved by our poet Longfellow, mount the broad stone stairs at



the right, and passing through the vast vaulted chamber wherein were stored the paste-board statues of the revered giants used in the town fêtes, and the furled, dusty banners leaning against the walls, mount leisurely the hundreds of worn stone steps leading upwards to that small, leaden-floored room where the carillon is played, and from the narrow-leaded, glass windows look out over the broad-banded, golden and green fields ribboned with silvery canals, and embossed by small, red-tiled farmhouses and straw stacks. But now these pleasures are spoiled for me, for the "tripper" is over all, the town is filled with "him and her"; where he comes from, or whither she goes, I know not, neither do I care. Whether he is English or she German or they Americans, 'tis all one to me, for between them they have absorbed its fine flavor and left me but the shell. . . .

The Fleming loves bells. He hangs them on the collars of those huge, broad-backed, thick-legged horses which serve him so well dragging along such Brobdingnagian loads in thick-wheeled, low-bodied wagons one meets along the poplar-fringed roads. These bells are somewhat like those we have on our sleighs in the winter, but they range from the size of a coffee cup down to a thimble. These he attaches to the heavy, brass-faced collar of the leader and the jangle is as



THE BELFRY AT BRUGES



musical as may be imagined, especially on market days in the early morning, when the Grand' Place (every Flemish town has its Grand' Place, by the way) resounds with the clamor of the venders. All the shops have bells attached by springs which ring whenever the door is opened and shut, and the pet dogs and cats even are furnished with bells on their collars. So, too, in each town the churches are perpetually ringing their bells for services about to begin or end, and one may see on the roofs of the farmhouses small "pents" in which hang bells used to call the laborers to dinner, and to sound the curfew at night, or as it sometimes happens, to give an alarm of fire, which unhappily is of little more use, for the wells are invariably too low to furnish a stream of water even if the engine is summoned, so the house or barn, sometimes both, is consumed as they helplessly look on. In every town or nearly so is a Belfry in the "Grand' Place" and invariably this has a fine set of bells, usually played by a "Tambour" connected with the clock mechanism, and most of these bells are by famous founders, and bear upon their sides inscriptions giving their names, such as "Roland" or "Grand Mathiew" and the date and name of the founder or maker. These bells ring out the quarters, the halves and the hours, and heard over the roofs of the houses and fields,



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the sounds are indescribably sweet and melodious. Thus in Flanders both day and night are marked by these sweet sounds, set as it were to the music of the bells. Alas! how it has all changed. Bruges now has hopes of being a seaport and with its canal leading from Zee Brugge on the North Sea, and navigable for large steamers, the Brugois believe that eventually the town will regain its lost prestige and rival Antwerp. Consequently its streets are gay with modern-looking shops and throngs of people, all of which quite spoils it for the artist. Gone are many of the quaint old houses over which I formerly gloated and drew so painstakingly in my student days. And now, large vans filled with tourists "personally conducted" tour the town, stopping here and there for the conductor to explain the sights. Chosen spots on the once silent quays beneath the old palaces are occupied with "artists" sketching in schools, and one meets in the streets groups of people armed with Baedekers. The proprietor of the Panier d'Or has waxed so great in bulk through prosperity that he can scarcely pass between the crowded tables at the dinner hour. I saw him yesterday waddling about, but he did not recognize me. All the shops have conspicuously placed signs bearing the legend, "English Spoken." Bruges has almost entirely lost its former character. It

can no longer be called "a dead city." It has awakened, but the awakening, artistically speaking, is painful to those who loved it for its former quality. The "fête communal" formerly so picturesque in Bruges has not now, it seems to me, the character it once had, due to the modern spirit of the town. The fine flavor of old seems lacking. The merry-go-rounds are too gorgeous in equipment, and there are too many automobiles in the streets. I sought in vain for the ancient, stained-canvas booths and the scrubby-looking, diminutive donkeys which formerly stood in patient rows at the upturned cart-tails behind the stalls. The ancient, musty groups of wax figures of the crowned heads of Europe, the wonder and delight of generations of gaping peasantry are no longer in evidence. I could not find "La Belle Heloise," the largest woman in the world, nor the strong man with his tremendous iron weights. In their stead, large constructions of plate glass and flashing mirrors bright with painted panels, and electric lights in which moving pictures of the great prize fight were shown and other modern wonders such as *aéroplanes* and "Loop the Loops" now attract and mystify the wondering peasants. And all this in lovely old Bruges! So we sadly wended our way down the Rue du Sablon toward the station before which stood taxicabs in rows in-

stead of the ancient fiacres and sleepy horses, and here we took leave of our once beloved Bruges and regretted that we had been tempted to tarry there at all.

#### THE LACEMAKERS

I wondered often at the number of bent old women, whom I met in the streets, clad in the long, heavy-hooded cloak of the peasantry until one day it suddenly occurred to me that these were the old lacemakers, bent and blinded by years of close hard work over the cushion and bobbins. Passing through the silent, grass-grown streets of Oudenaarde, Ypres or Dixmude (Yperen and Dixmuiden in Flemish) one has fleeting glimpses into the small living rooms through the dim windowpanes, of lace-capped, bent figures of women and girls sitting crouched over the lace cushions with fingers flying over the bobbins which they place and displace with incredible rapidity, only stopping to pull out and reinsert the pins which hold the threads over the pattern. Thus they pass their lives at work until their sight fails them. There is little for them to do but exist, for they are as a rule too feeble to work at any other trade. At one time, not many years ago, when lace ceased to be made, it was feared that the art would perish, indeed, it nearly did so, and but for

the efforts of Madame Kefer-Mali and some other kindred spirits of Brussels who have untiringly labored on behalf of the art, it might, indeed, have perished, but these ladies have been instrumental in founding endowed schools in many of the old towns where the old patterns, taken from the museums, are now taught, and in consequence there is now a real revival of this beautiful art. There have been periods of disaster for the lacemakers even from the time of Margaret of Parma and Catherine of Aragon, in whose honor the lacemakers keep certain days in memory. Even in Buckinghamshire in England the day of Queen Catherine of Aragon is remembered. "Cattern's day," they call it, and there is a small cake named for her, the unhappy queen, who "her days did pass in working with the needle curiously," for here at Ampthill she lived the sad years prior to her divorce from Henry VIII, and the people loved her for her piety and for teaching them the art of lace making. Tradition says that she burnt all her beautiful lace during a season of famine and, giving generous orders to the lace workers, thus tided them over their troubles. The Flemish during the wars, fled to England and brought with them their bobbins and pillows, of which they were, as we have read in the legend, the inventors, and with them they brought the curling, waved designs

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which are still characteristic of Buckinghamshire lace. They settled in Newport Pagnell, Great Marlow, in Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire and Northhamptonshire, and the art grew and flourished through the days when men wore lace upon their top boots, their cuffs and their night-caps. Until at the end of the eighteenth century we read that in one village alone eight hundred of a population of twelve hundred were employed in the work which brought an annual profit of eight thousand pounds. But thereafter, more prosaic times arrived. Men grew less decorative in their dress, and after the French Revolution a change of taste set in which caused ladies to bestow their lace upon their servants as "old rubbish." This brought the industry to a low ebb, and the designs degenerated. Traveling buyers formerly kept up the quality of such work as was carried on in the small towns, and every fortnight they would appear with measuring sticks at the public house, and there the women would gather with their strips of lace. If the work was at all uneven, and lay not flat and smooth on the table, or if it was short of the yard it was tossed back to the unlucky or unskillful worker. Then, too, if a worker sold to a rival traveler or agent, she was deprived of employment, and this was the state of things until within the last few years, when



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these ladies of Brussels took up the task which at first seemed almost hopeless, and now in the dead towns of Flanders are hundreds of workers bending over the bolster-shaped pillows with their clusters of bobbins hanging from rows of pins, and the children are instructed in the mysteries of the ancient art. Not in the old, cruel way, when failure to complete a certain number of "pins" meant blows upon the little shoulders, but in the more humane manner of the present day. Unless, however, the hands are early taught the habit of the bobbin, real dexterity and swiftness necessary to high earning power are never attained. In the olden days, I am told, both men and women plied this dainty and delicate craft, but the revived industry is in the hands of women and girls who are thus enabled in the small towns and villages where wages are low, to help very materially in the upkeep of the home. So in many a cottage the lace pillow pays the rent, while the nature of the work, its scrupulous refinement, and the delicacy of touch and handling it demands, cannot be without influence upon the lives of the workers.

THE LEGEND OF THE LACEMAKERS

"We have a legend here in Flanders of the origin of our beautiful lace," said the old Beguine. "Perhaps M'sieur has never heard it? Ah, then,



I shall have the pleasure of telling it. (*Oui, cest bien la terre et le soleil d'ici que renferme l'araignée tisse dans le printemps. Aussi la legende pretend-elle que ces fils ont inspire l'ouvrage charmant des femmes.*) In a poor farmhouse hidden behind a fringe of ancient trees, at the edge of a small village of Flanders, once lived a young shepherdess, who, all against her will and innocently, loved a young man, the son of the rich farmer who owned the neighboring farm. She had never even spoken to him nor he to her, but long had they looked upon the same sky piled with fleecy clouds, or as the night fell, listened to the song of birds and the soft murmur coming from the dark recesses of the heavy forest. Almost without being conscious of it, or against their own wishes they each experienced the charm of the same sensations which little by little had possessed them. But, alas! one day the young man came no more to the edge of the clearing near the forest, and the sheep of the château were guarded by a morose old peasant who sat knitting silently, his black dog lying at his feet. Day by day the young girl, consumed by her sorrow, which she could confide to no one, watched for the return of her lover, but he came not, nor did she know whither he had gone, nor if he ever thought of her, and so she took her sheep daily along the great wide plains

which stretched out before her, over which the shadows of the heavy clouds came and went and still he came never again. Then one day she reached the edge of the thick green wood, and throwing herself on the grass beside a mossy tree trunk, she abandoned herself freely to her dreams. Here between the tree trunks, beside her a large spider (*Araignée*) appeared and began busily to weave its web. Half unconsciously she watched it, being in need of something to distract her thought from her aching heart, and although she had formerly shrunk from spiders as repulsive and ill-formed creatures, she now found herself studying its movements with a new interest and even pleasure in its industry. She saw the creature (*bestiole*) pause, swinging at the end of a thread so fine as to be almost invisible, then slowly it pulled itself up — up, attached the thread to a twig, then dropping, fixed the thread below and turning, began again the slow ascent to its first place, leaving behind it some threads, fine, silky and so delicate that in order to see them, she had to stoop so that they appeared against the golden horizon and the leaves ruddied by the beams of the afternoon sun. So she watched the spider for two hours, fascinated and unmindful of her sheep which began to gather round her wondering why she did not take them home. The spider, at length, finished

its web, and there it lay shining soft and silky in the late sunshine, a harmony of design and line, forming a beautiful rayed wheel, in the center of which rested the spider weary with its labor. Then arose the shepherdess calmed in spirits and falling upon her knees, thanked the good saint who watched over her and there and then vowed to forget her heart's pain, and to set herself to copy the spider's work with equal patience and industry. Then she gently and carefully detached the fragile web from the tree trunks and lifting it with the palm of her hand, let it lie there in all the beauty of its perfection and holding it before her carefully so that no thread might be displaced, she gathered her sheep together and went home to her small garret room, where she carefully placed the frail gossamer on her rough linen pillow. On the morrow, she procured in the village some fine linen thread, and with a prayer to the good saint, she began to imitate the spider's web. Thus did the little shepherdess of long ago create the first piece of lace, and this work of hers, done at first in secret, became more and more subtle and delicate, and expressed thought and hopes and peace which had come to her wounded heart, and so, one day it came to the ears of the great lady of the château that a wonder had been produced in the village, and she sent for the young shepherdess to bring



her the work that she might see it, and she marveled at its perfection and the fame of the young shepherdess traveled far until it reached the great lady who ruled the land. And soon the humble young peasant girl had to travel to court and there she was made much of, so that soon she was made to teach others to fashion the filmy lace which adorned the person of the great lady when she wed the foreign lord who came in a great ship to Bruges, and there at court, she remained until she grew old, fashioning lace with hands old and trembling and veined, yet ever skillful in designing after the patterns of nature. The butterfly on the web, the slender fillets of seaweed which floats ashore after a storm, and the veined leaves of the rose of Flanders, these patterns, M'sieur, we still make here in the Beguinage, but never can we improve upon them, perfect as they are from the hand of the little shepherdess."

DAMME

An hour's walk from Bruges along the picturesque canal bordered by tall thin trees, which are most charmingly reflected in its still waters, and lonely but for an occasional high, green-painted, market wagon, in which, sits a stolid blue-bloused farmer and mayhap his buxom,

red-faced wife, with an absurd beflowered and befeathered sort of bonnet perched upon her lace-capped head; or a silently moving canal barge, drawn by a couple of panting, streaming women and a boy, while Mynheer sits smoking on the tiller, ruminating, or perhaps not even doing that. This walk of an hour brings one to the lost, deserted town of Damme, the former great seaport of which now scarcely a vestige remains, but a sad collection of ancient constructions crumbling away about a deserted square. Studying the ancient map and engravings preserved in the archives in Bruges, and remembering its imposing turrets, its castles, its vast wharves at which three-masted merchantmen from the Indies and from Venice are depicted discharging the rich cargoes, it is not easy to find one's bearings in the town or rather what remains of it. All about are fair green meadows in which black and white cattle graze, and there is no sign of life save the waving arms of a mill, and even this is some distance away. In the course of ages the very ground has assumed a different appearance and it is difficult to understand why the burghers of Bruges, then a rival of Damme, had to throw up vast dykes to protect themselves from the inroads of the sea between their town and Damme. Assuredly now there is no sign of a sea anywhere about, and nowhere else in Flanders can

one find a more desolate spot. By dint of searching I found certain indications of wharves or what might once have been wharves, a short distance from the square, and the remains of dykes are visible, too, in the green fields. I found the famous Town Hall given up to the offices of a most humble inn, and I had some beer and cheese with bread in a lofty, wooden-beamed hall with a huge fireplace big enough to roast an ox whole, where the local magistrate now holds his court, for in Flanders, the estaminet, furnishing tobacco and drink for whosoever wills, is found almost at every step, and in some towns there are almost as many drinking places as houses. The old dame who served me was most loquacious and while it rained gently outside, and I ate, and drank the thin, bitter, sour beer of the locality, she knitted placidly and talked and talked, of the potatoes, the beets which were spoiling because of the rain; of her grandson who was away, serving his allotted period in the army at Ghent. Finally I could stand it no longer and went out to study the statue of Coster van Maërlant, erected by the authorities of Bruges in the square. The figure is a good one, by Pickery, and represents the poet in Florentine dress, Dantesque in altitude, and altogether impressive, and I would have studied it longer but for the torrents of rain which forced me to return

to the loquacious old lady, who welcomed me so warmly that I was ashamed of my petulance, and I tried to be more gracious, and thanked her when she insisted upon pointing out the portrait of Maërlant among a number of delicately carved heads ornamenting one of the heavy beams overhead.

In spite of its dilapidated appearance, the Town Hall is a most interesting example of Gothic Renaissance. The main door is approached by a beautiful double flight of steps. The old dame showed me at the back on the ground floor, a fine vaulted chamber supported by heavy columns and now used as a stable. In the corner was an immense pink and white sow with a litter, evidently the pride of the old dame, for she had a name for each of the squirming things, which she turned over for my inspection. The construction of this vaulted room is most masterly and its lighting is perfect from narrow apertures. Seemingly it had been a refectory in ancient times. Against the wall, leaned some remains of old, nail-studded doors, to one of which still clung two exquisitely hammered iron hinges, and a huge lock of intricate mechanism which I coveted. I think the old dame read my thoughts for she would have sold it to me as it stood for a small amount, but as I was afoot, and far from a rail-

way, I forbore. I regret it now. With the exception of a small part of the ancient cathedral, which was the scene of Charles the Bold's wedding in 1468, nothing now remains of the former grandeur of the great town of Damme, seaport and fortress. On the walk back to Bruges, I dodged the frequent showers, remaining sometimes for ten minutes at a time, "close handed beside tall tree trunks," with the low-lying clouds crossing overhead, so low that it seemed as if I could touch them had I a tall enough pole; watching the sunlight come and go over the level fields on either hand where black dots of peasants labored in the fields, or steeped the black bundles of rotting flax in dark pools, while the roadway stretched straight beside the canal. Solitude reigns supreme, silence everywhere, and at the right, dimly seen against the sky, the grayish-blue mass of a huge tower rises from a clump of trees.

In the fourteenth century Bruges was the great commercial center of Europe, one of the headquarters of the great Hanseatic League and of the English wood trade, a market for merchants of all parts of the world. The agents of seventeen nations, so it is said, had there their headquarters; twenty consuls made the city their place of residence; the merchants of Lombardy and Venice came to exchange the tissues of Italy and the



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Levant, as well as the rarities of Persia and the Indies, for the production of the Netherlands and all the North. Vessels arrived from the four quarters of the globe at the quays of Bruges, where congregated the merchants of Hamburg, Bremen, Cologne, Lubeck, London, Venice, Genoa, Vienna, Pisa and Cremona.

During this period of unexampled prosperity, a brilliant colony of artists were attracted and employed, and it is to them and their works that Bruges owes its fame and its present interest.

But little is known of the painters who exercised their art here during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, but we learn from the meager chronicles of the time that the artists for the most part came from the borders of the Rhine, Holland, Limburg, and Walloon Flanders. They were known to the people as "Pingeres" or "Schilders," that is to say, painters of escutcheons, because during this period of art their principal work was the painting of Coats of Arms and the like, also as "Hauscrivers" (sign writers) and "Beilderscrivers" (picture writers) i. e., those who painted on walls, and on oaken panels.

There is to be found in Bruges only one mural painting of the fourteenth century, which was accidentally uncovered by some workmen who were repairing the walls of the Church of Notre Dame



in 1874. It represents St. Louis and is ornamented by some curious leaves in black and white disposed as a border about the work. The artist is unknown, but it is supposed to have been painted about the middle of the fourteenth century and to have been the work of Jan Van Jabbeke, but I find very little in support of this theory.

Before the use of oil became general or was known as a vehicle for painting, the early Flemish and other artists used distemper. The vehicle or medium with which the color was mixed, was sometimes honey, sometimes beer or vinegar, but more often the white of an egg, and when the picture was finished it was varnished with a resinous substance in which was often mixed a certain quantity of color to give "tone" or mellowness to the work.

There is in the Church of Saint Saveur, a picture dating from the end of the fourteenth century, which is apparently painted in this manner. It represents the Christ on the Cross, with three angels receiving in chalices the blood which flows from His wounds. At the right and left of the panel are seen Saints Catherine and Barbara.

This picture is thought to be a representative example of the school of the fifteenth century, and one cannot but be struck by the truthfulness of the detail, particularly when you recall the date of the work. The faces are full of character, express-

ion and a certain simplicity of pose. Indeed, the heads are all quite noble in design, that of the Virgin, being exceedingly beautiful. The figure of the Saviour, on the other hand, is long and painfully thin — after the fashion of the period, and somewhat faulty in drawing, particularly as to the hands and feet, the fingers and toes of which are absurdly long. The principal shortcoming is found in the color which is muddy, and there is that lack of transparency in the flesh, generally found in the work of Westphalians. The draperies in their beautiful drawing and arrangement suggest the Netherland School, and seem to have been painted in oil over the lighter medium by other and perhaps later hands. The painter is not known, but it is said to be the work of one Master Jean Coene, who practiced his art with success in 1388.

Among the artists who were attracted to Bruges during the fifteenth century, I find the name of Arnold upton Diic, native of Duisburg en Gueldre, Guillaume Van Beringhen, originally of Maastricht, Jan Van den Driessche, and Guillaume Van Tongern (of Tongres) ; but the first and most celebrated of all artists of Flanders, of whose work there is no possible doubt, was Jan Van Eyk, a native of Mass Eyk, who, as it is well known, lived and painted in Bruges from 1431 to the date of his death on the 9th of July, 1440.



THE MARECHALE GATE — BRUGES

1

The Canon, George Van der Pale, commissioned him to paint the Altar screen, now in the Academie des Beaux Arts, which is remarkable entirely for its attention to minute details. It is perhaps the most striking example to be found in Bruges of the decadence of religious sentiment and the ascendancy of realism. Unfortunately it has suffered much from the restorer's hand, and the draperies are almost entirely ruined by retouching, the color being somewhat hot and hard, but the drawing is generally firm, and undoubtedly the execution was rapid. This picture is the largest known from the Master's hand. The most pronounced realism reigns in it, and the face of the Virgin is certainly commonplace and the most unpleasant of all the Virgins painted by Van Eyk. On each corner of the primitive frame may be seen the arms of Van der Pale (?). The portrait "En buste" of the wife of the painter (also in the Academie) demonstrates conclusively the talent he had for the work of that sort—extreme finish of execution and rendering of detail.

This picture is said to have been found with its pendant, the portrait of the painter by himself, in the possession of the Corporation of Painters and Saddlers.

Of the pupils of Van Eyk, I am only able to find chronicled, the name of one, Pierre Cristus, a

native of Baerle, who under the tuition of Van Eyk became one of the most remarkable painters of the town, but of whose work I was unable to find a single example.

Many imitators of Van Eyk existed both during and after his time in Bruges and elsewhere, but it is seldom difficult to separate the work of the master from that of the simple followers.

The artist of the fifteenth century whose name and work is most intimately connected with that of the town, is undoubtedly Hans Memlinc (written by some authorities Hemlinc), born in Gueldre about 1430. He is said to have learned his art at Cologne under Roger la Pasture (or Van Weyden ?) and Simon Marmion. In 1478 he was established at Bruges in a magnificent house in the rue Vlaminkendam, and had acquired considerable reputation as a painter both at home and abroad. He died in 1495 after a period of almost unexampled activity. Unhappily, according to the best authorities, only six authenticated paintings from his brush are now in Bruges, equally divided between the Hospital of Saint Jean and the Musee of the Academie. It is said that his coming to Bruges was accidental, for having, like so many of his craft, taken up arms for the King, he was wounded in the battle of Nancy, and carried to Bruges, was received at the Hospital of Saint Jean,

for which, in return for the care and attention he received, he painted many pictures in gratitude. This story is a pretty one, and one dislikes to discredit it, but unfortunately for the romanticist, there is little foundation for it, and it is said by some authorities to be a fact, that many of the pictures now in the Hospital, and ascribed to Memlinc, are in reality the work of imitators, and of his pupils.

However this may be, in his work, as well as in that which is ascribed to him, the school of Van Eyk exhibits its highest attainments, i. e., careful drawing, and color at once pure and filled with a mysterious quality.

From documents preserved in the town library, I find that he was possessed of three houses and a considerable piece of land in the Rue du Pont Flamand. In 1840 his name is among those of some 250 bourgeois notables, who loaned money to the Commercial administration with which to carry on the war between Maximilien and France. Memlinc had a wife named Anne, who bore him three children:—Hans, Corneille, and Nicholas. She died in September, 1487. Memlinc himself died sometime between September, 1492, and December, 1495, probably during the year 1495. His resting place is unknown, but it is thought to be in the cemetery of Saint Gilles.



Another Hollander who was attracted to Bruges by the wealth and appreciation accorded to the artist by the merchants, a painter whose name became identified with that of the town, was Gerard David, already celebrated at the time of his arrival in 1484, as a miniature painter. He lived and worked in Bruges until his death in 1523. In the Academie will be found many examples of his work, of which the "Histoire du Juge Prevaricator," painted in 1489, is perhaps the most famous; and in the Church of Saint Basile may be found his last work "La Disposition du Christ." Of his pupil, Adrien Isenbran, little is known and I am unable to find one example from his brush, although without doubt after the fashion of the period he did much work upon the pictures of his famous master.

Of the artists of renown who lived in Bruges and made it famous, I find in the given order the following names:—Jan Van Eyk, native of Maeseyk, died the 9th of July, 1440. Pierre Cristus, native of Baerle, died about 1473, Hans Memlinc, originally from Gueldre, died about 1495, Jean Prevost, native of Mons, died in January, 1529— all painters. Gerald David, native of Oudewater, died in August, 1523, and Pierre Claeissins, the elder, died in 1576; both of these were painters and illuminators. Lancelot Blondel,

artist, engraver and engineer, originally of Poperinghe, died March, 1561. Simon Bennine, illuminator, originally of Antwerp, died about 1561. Hubert Goltz, artist, engraver and printer, originally of Würzburg, died in March, 1583; Adrien Isenbran, artist, died in July, 1551; Pierre Pourbas, artist and engineer, native of Gouda, died in January, 1584; also François Pourbas his son, artist, died in the same year. Jacques Van den Coornhuuse, artist, native of Furnes, died sometime about the end of the century. Marc Gheeraerts, artist, in December, 1605, and Pierre Claeissins, Antoine Claeissins, Jacques Van Oost, all artists, laid down their brushes forever at the close of the seventeenth century.

To form an idea of the wealth and prosperity of Bruges, in 1456, it is said that on one day, one hundred and fifty foreign vessels entered its basins through the canals. The town which had then attained the height of its splendor, boasted of fifty-two Guilds, or workman's Associations, and, according to some authorities, one hundred and fifty thousand inhabitants. Fifty thousand workmen labored within the walls and the streets became so crowded at certain hours of the day, that, to prevent accidents, incidental to the outgoing and incoming of the workmen, the authorities caused a bell to be rung from the Beffroi (Were-

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clocke) to notify mothers to call in the children from the streets, and the bridges over the canals could not be raised while it rang. This bell also announced the work hours for the Guilds.

The 15th of June, 1467, saw the death of Philip l'Asseure, the richest prince of his time, and the marriage of Charles the Bold to Marguerite, Duchess of York, sister of Edward IV, who, driven from England by Warwick, came to live at the house of Louis de la Gruuthuus, at Bruges, until favorable circumstances permitted him to recover his kingdom.

In January, 1477, Marie of Burgundy succeeded to the throne, and with her fiancé, the Duke of Bavaria, made joyous entry in the following August. Their son, Philippe le Beau, was born here on the 22nd of June, 1478, where dwelt his mother up to the time of his death. In June, 1485, Maximilien was inaugurated Regent of the country.

The decline of Bruges, caused in part by filling up of the Zwin with sand, and partly by the civil discord which multiplied under the "Main-bournie" of Maximilien, dates from this epoch. The sedition of 1488 and the struggle between Maximilien and the Flemings resulted in the suspension of all business during three months. Security of property was at an end, and the mer-

chants withdrew from Bruges and settled at Antwerp. Both art and commerce turned its back upon the city, and in 1495, it is said, from four to five thousand houses were vacant and abandoned. It is also said that the Commune, of which the annual revenue at this time was but seventy thousand crowns, became indebted to the sum of six hundred thousand crowns. Thus poverty settled over the town which thenceforth was abandoned by all, save those who could not leave, and so it was until the early part of the last century.

The celebration of the Liquefaction of the Holy Blood has taken place annually during the last eight hundred years, and each year early in May, the second day of the month to be exact, the old town is filled on this occasion with pilgrims from the surrounding country, come to confession, and afterwards to celebrate a veritable orgy of drunkenness, the annual festival for which the town is famous. One who loves the quaintness and solitude of Bruges will do well to leave as soon as the procession is at an end, and before night falls, for the scenes enacted in the side streets and the drinking houses are really bestial. The celebration is due to the following happening:

Thierry d'Alsace, leader of a band of Flemish warriors joined the crusade in 1147. He was the

husband of Sybilla, sister of King Baldwin of Jerusalem, and she induced her brother to give him as a present, a part of the most precious relic possessed by the Holy Church of Palestine, which consisted of a quantity of what was said to be the Blood and Water of Christ, preserved by Joseph of Arimathea, who prepared the Body of our Saviour for burial in the tomb. This was presented to Thierry, Count of Flanders, with very great solemnity in the Church of the Holy Sepulcher at Jerusalem, at the great Christmas Festival in the year 1148.

Canon Van Haecke in his "Le Precieux Sang A'Bruges" says, "The Patriarch, displaying the vessel containing the precious fluid to the people divided the contents into two portions, pouring one into a crystal vial, he sealed it with golden wire, and closed the ends with golden stoppers, and this suspended by silver chains, he gave into the hands of Thierry, who kneeling at the Altar steps, received it with the most profound emotion." Deeming himself unfit and unworthy to convey so precious a relic to Bruges, Thierry intrusted it to a chaplain of the Flemish troop, one Leonius by name, who arrived at Bruges in May, 1150, and was conducted in state by monks and high officials to the Bourg, where he delivered the Holy Object to the priests of St. Basil at the

door of what is now known as the Chapel of the Holy Blood. Chronicles say that the Blood "liquefied every Friday, usually at six o'clock," and this is vouched for in documents signed by Pope Clement V and it is furthermore gravely alleged that this miracle took place at regular intervals up to the year 1325. Bishop William of Ancona vouches for its liquefaction upon one occasion, when in company with the Bishop of Lincoln and other church dignitaries. "He was astonished to see the contents of the vial change and some drops like unto newly-shed blood trickle down the sides of the vial which he held in his hand." Many miracles are said to have been wrought through the agency of the Holy Blood, such as the raising of a child from the dead, and the healing of paralytics "who but touched her lips to the vial," and upon the occasion of a conflagration which threatened to destroy the Hotel de Ville in the year 1689, a priest ran for the relic, and holding it up before the building, "the flames were instantly extinguished." So that these authenticated miracles which are confirmed by witnesses are accepted by the church and the relic is consecrated as an object of profound veneration by the whole of Flanders as well as by the faithful at Bruges. The Chapel in whose shrine the vial is guarded, was

restored in 1856 by two Englishmen, architects, Thomas Harper King and William Brangwyn, the latter the father of the painter, Frank Brangwyn who was born in Bruges. On the second day of May each year, a mass is celebrated in the Chapel of the Holy Blood, and the people crowd the building to the doors, and out in the square are kneeling multitudes. There are two chapels, the upper and the lower, and here in this gloomy-looking crypt, the kneeling throng filling the aisles, the dim lights from the dripping, guttering candles, the muffled silence, and the flitting figures of gorgeously-clad priests before the altars, lend mystery to the scene. At nine o'clock the Tabernacle or "Chasse" as it is called, of gold and crested with jewels, is carried to the Church of St. Saveur through the streets in procession where pontifical mass is celebrated by the Bishop of Flanders, after which the "Chasse" is then carried on the shoulders of high church dignitaries through the streets in solemn procession. Upon every hand the houses and shops are hung with banners and flags, and rows of burning wax and tallow candles placed in the windows lend a weirdness to the scene. The narrow streets are filled to suffocation with the peasants in holiday attire; church bells and chimes are ringing and the odor of incense is over all in clouds. The cel-

ebred "Guide," the noble regiment of Brussels, or King's Guard, accompanies the Bishops and there are afterwards, bands of music, singing societies bearing banners covered with medals, Guilds in procession, pilgrims of both sexes walking barefoot, young girls in white with long veils bearing green boughs and palms, priest with the Holy relics accompanied by acolytes clad in scarlet, swinging smoking censers of brass by means of long chains, all slowly filing between the lines of kneeling peasants. The cortége passes slowly to the Hotel de Ville, where a great altar has been erected. Here the multitude quite fills the space to witness the closing act of the great festival. Under the trees one sees dimly a mass of gold and color amid clouds of incense. Here amid the clashing of bells, the Bishop ascends the steps of the high altar, and silence falls as if by magic when he holds high above his head the vial of the Holy Blood. All fall upon their knees and the sound is as the waves of the sea beating upon the shore, as the Bishop descends the steps and carries the precious object to the chapel. . . . The ceremony is over.

Now begin other scenes which contrast most strangely with all this churchly pomp and ceremony. The Flemish peasant as has been remarked elsewhere in this book, is not very refined



at best, but now, on this yearly occasion he takes advantage of the fact that his sins have been forgiven him, and celebrates accordingly. When night falls then, the squares are empty and dark, the crowds that filled the streets have disappeared, and but for the raucous blare of steam organs in the "Herbergs" and "Estaminets" as the drinking places are called, the town is as it was before, but this is during the supper hour,— wait until the peasants have had their meal, then the really dreadful sights begin, which last throughout the night, and until the sun rises in the morning on lines of drunken wretches of both sexes lying in the gutters and by-ways. In the neighborhood of the fish markets nearly every other house is a saloon with a sloppy kind of bar and some rough tables and chairs on a sanded floor. Here the stolid peasants gather, men, women and children, mostly farmhands and laborers. This is their one great spree, I might call it, of the year. All night they dance, drink and carouse, packed into these noisy rooms where the air is foul with fumes of cooking and drink and tobacco smoke, and even out in the street, slippery with the refuse of the market, they sit at small tables, eating and drinking. Tipsy men and women reeling about; noisy disputes, ribald laughter and uncouth pleasantries, in short all the hideous indecency and tawdriness

painted by Teniers and others of the long ago, is repeated upon this night of the Procession of the Holy Blood in Bruges, in the year of our Lord Nineteen Hundred and Ten. A wretched, sordid picture indeed, and a blot upon the town.

In Bruges, both day and night are musical with the silvery chime of bells. There is music, not only for the town but for the hamlets for miles around. Time floats here upon the wings of sweet strains. The peasant is born amid the melody of bells, and to the same strains the priest blesses the humble marriage, and finally scatters the soil over his poor coffin.

Over the red-tiled housetops the melody pours; over the golden green fields bathed in cloud or yellow sunshine, above the hum of the Market Place, or deep in the night, in one's dreams with which they mingle until the rhythm becomes part of one's dormant fancies, one's very emotions, and dwells forever in one's memory.

These harmonious sounds come from the ancient belfry on the great Market Square, which is surrounded by equally ancient houses of Hispano-Flemish Architecture. It is difficult to give a word picture of the grand old tower, whose rich brown color embosses the pearly sky. It quite crushes the great square building at its foot into insignificance, and it is only after one has become

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accustomed to the sight of this dominant feature of the landscape that the latter at all asserts itself, and proves worthy of closer examination. Yet even then the eye strays upward to that immense pile of warm, purple-brown brick, and is held fascinated.

The first object which the approaching traveler sees, and the last which he loses sight of as he steams away across the plain, it has the appearance of sternly watching over the town. Its origin is lost in the mist of the ages, and the first mention of it is during the thirteenth century, when it was partially destroyed by fire. Starting from the squally Halles with their rows of graceful windows of the pointed period, the eye is arrested at the string courses, and the rows of hanging corbels, above which runs an arcade of cunningly interlaced arches ending in a round turret at each corner. Now the tower contracts its square form and on its purple-blooming, brick walls are traced blind windows. Above these are pairs of pointed windows on each of its four sides, and above them an open arcade of small, arched piercings. It is at this stage that the tower takes on its octagonal form, each angle of the square opposing a round turret, from which in turn springs a short crocheted final pointed pinnacle. The tower now slightly diminished in size is joined by light flying

buttresses to the pinnacles. Above again are the four huge disks of the clock, and over these are exquisitely-pointed windows, eight in number, through which one catches glimpses of the carillon hanging on massive beams painted a brown-red in harmony with the greenish patina of the bells. Finally it ends against the sky in a delicate lace-like fringe of stone work with a tiny pinnacle at each corner. If one is wise, one will not attempt to know it all at once. It is better to approach it by degrees, and by degrees to taste its wonders and delights, and finally, when one is in the mood, to pass the guard of slouchy soldiers at the archway, and penetrate the quadrangle with its rows of curious tombstones leaning against the walls, and its vast empty rooms where the dust lies thick, and the chattering swallows dip and skim in and out of the long windows. One will find a flight of stone steps at the right of the entrance, and at its top a barking dog, whose fierce demeanor soon changes to abject groveling. There will be perchance a smell of savory herbs cooking, and the noise of a clock ticking loudly, and after an interval a charming old Flemish dame in a lovely lace cap will hobble into view, unlock a heavy oaken door with a huge iron key, collect a toll, and pointing upwards to a long flight of stone steps vanishing in the darkness, will



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calmly proceed to lock and bar the heavy door behind you.

Then you will hear mysterious sounds all about, will see dimly in the pale violet light coming through the tiny slits of windows, certain heavy doors; dim, dusty openings; steps leading upward; rows of headless statues and torn, soiled banners of silk; high, gilded armchairs and huge, dark paintings of long-forgotten Flemish nobles; piles of old books in hogskin bindings, and the remnants of chains attached to their backs, and against the wall, half lost in the gloom, two immense pasteboard figures of giants with certain ghastly objects in their hands. All these will one see and without the boredom of a guide. Occasionally on the landings he will see long pencils of sunlight like bars of molten gold lying on the dust, and he will hear the whir of wings about the openings, and the coo of pigeons. After an interval the light will vanish, and you will stumble up the worn stone steps with the waxy handrope tightly grasped, round and round the central shaft, up — up until one's head fairly swims, and one loses count of the steps; will pass great gulfs spanned with mighty oaken beams, then bricked-up doorways, and at once will catch sight of the rim of a huge bell of a delicious tone of green-gray. Finally he will reach a leather-covered door and enter a room

floored with plates of lead, and filled with iron rods, pulleys, and ropes, connecting with two immense cylinders, and all about will sound a mysterious beating — a wheezing and reverberation followed by a warning whir of giant fans and chains. The great cylinders will begin to revolve, levers and pulleys rattle and shriek, then faint, clear, sweetly coming from afar, one hears the music of the bells subdued, soft, like harmony from an æolian. But this is from the lower chamber. Very different will be the impression of the sounds if one is among the bells when the hour or the quarter is struck. Here, among the hanging bells is a sort of chamber, where lives a being who seems the very double of Caliban, so hairy and wild-looking is he. He is the watchman and is forced to pull upon a rope every seven minutes before the bells sound.

I shall not forget the fright he gave me when fancying myself alone in the tower I was examining the carillon, and he thrust his huge, red, hairy face between the two bells under which I groped, and stood there staring while I froze with horror, while the bells row upon row, above and about us, clashed and clanged and boomed, swinging as if they would the next minute fall upon us and crush us. Thus he stood in this turmoil of din and roar, and finally when it ended he de-

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manded in villainous French and the mousiest squeak of a voice imaginable, a small fee for beer money.

Up in the bell chamber the bells are not sweet toned nor musical; the ear cannot separate the notes, the sound is uneven and inharmonious in the extreme. It is a relief when the noise ceases and there remains only a dull echoing hum which seems to cling to the very stones. Up a short flight of steps, in another leaden-floored room, one comes upon the rough keyboard or clavier, by means of which the chime was anciently played by such men as the Vanden Gheyns, famous Carilloneurs of Louvain, who played upon the bells by means of this rude machine the "morceaux figures" which are alike the wonder and despair of our modern musicians. This famous keyboard is still used upon such occasions as the King's birthday, and upon fête days. Forty bells compose the carillon, which is not in perfect tune be it said, but the difference is not noticeable save to the attuned ear of the practiced musician.

"Melchior" is the great, or bass bell. It is said to weigh 19,000 lbs; and requires relays of four men to sound his note. It is only heard upon great occasions, such as war, or general rejoicing.

What a wondrous panorama it is that is unfolded to one from the topmost windows of the old tower

at all points of the compass. Overhead are myriads of pigeons and rooks whirling and circling in the air. Below, the red-tiled town lies as a map in relief, its streets and canals, its silent squares, its dark green masses of venerable trees, its towers, steeples, walls and water gates, seem at the bottom of a huge green bowl, the rim of which is formed by the horizon, that flashing horizon silvered on the one side by the pale waters of the North Sea. Far away the eye notes the vast, tawny, yellow sand dunes. A silvery line of water leads straight between two lines of poplars past the wonderful old town of Damme to Sluis, once famed as a seaport, but now in the midst of flat green meadows, where it joins the silvery river Scheldt, which divides the two kingdoms of Holland and Belgium. Here and there the plain is dotted with little villages, like nails embossed upon a vast shield. To the east is dimly seen Antwerp. The one thought that is borne in upon one, is the sense of perfect repose; even the market square below is silent and grass-grown, and crossing it is a solitary, black-cloaked peasant. One listens intently to catch the clack of her sabots upon the uneven stones which from this height seem like stitches in a coarse piece of linen.

The sky over all is of that pale quality of blue mixed with gray and takes on a warmer tint at the



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horizon, harmonizing exquisitely with the grays, greens and soft brown-reds of the landscape, the very landscape so well loved by Teniers, Cuyp and Van der Velt.

At sunset the sky is flecked with molted gold, and a radiance spreads over the dark clump of foliage, tipping them here and there with ruddy coppery tones. Then turns the tower to a deep purplish-blue, and the silvery lines of waterways grow dark and are lost to sight, but one realizes that against that opalescent sky the tower stands out embossed in the ruddy glow of the sun long after darkness has fallen upon the low countries, and Caliban leads us down the steep stone steps round and round that central column, with dripping, guttering candle, past those mysterious doorways, under those immense oaken beams, and out into the deserted square.

# Song of Bruges.

## HET LIEDEKEN VAN BRUGGE,

JULIUS SABBE.

LEO VAN GHELUWE.

*Levendig.*  $\text{♩}$

Gij der ste-den uit-ver-ko-ren, Wonder-

The first system of music features a vocal line on a treble clef staff and piano accompaniment on grand staff (treble and bass clefs). The key signature has two flats (B-flat and E-flat), and the time signature is common time (C). The tempo marking is 'Levendig.' with a quarter note equal to one second. The lyrics 'Gij der ste-den uit-ver-ko-ren, Wonder-' are written below the vocal line.

star in 't grootsch wel - eer, Groet in 't

The second system continues the musical piece. The vocal line and piano accompaniment are shown. The lyrics 'star in 't grootsch wel - eer, Groet in 't' are written below the vocal line.

glo-rie-brons her - bo - ren Thans uw hel-den - zo - nen

*3de maal*  
*Einde.*

weer. Groet ze weer na't ban-ge strij - den en

*Einde.* *sf*

*Versterkend.* *Vertragend.*

lij - den, Darr rijst de hoop: kom, ban de smart weer

*Versterkend.* *Vertragend.*

*tijdmaat.*  
*mf*

uit uw hart. Bij den  
In uw  
Laat o

*tijdmaat.*  
*mf*

1 Gij, der steden uitverkoren,  
 Wonderstar in 't grootsch weleer,  
 Groet in 't gloriebrons herboren  
 Thans uw heldenzonen weer.  
 Groet ze weer na 't bange strijden  
 En lijden.  
 Daar rijst de hoop: kom, ban de smart  
 Weer uit uw hart.

## *Ghent*

THE day of our arrival the town was "en fête," throngs of happy-looking people in holiday attire filled the narrow tortuous streets between the low two- and three-storied stuccoed houses, which were hung with strange banners, some of a rich dark blue with a single yellow star in the center; others all black with a narrow border of red and yellow, and enclosing the Golden Lion of Flanders; these intermingled with the national colors of red, yellow and black vertical stripes. The sound of drums and bugles near at hand, and afar off; the tramp of many feet; the clang of bells on the street cars; barking of dogs, and the raucous cries of street venders filled the air. Companies of soldiers passed and repassed each other accompanied by hundreds of men and boys, and girls and women, too. The soldiers are small, puny-looking men, almost boys many of

them, clad in rather ill-fitting uniforms, the officers alone looking fit. These latter are of the better class of course. The drummers are boys of ten and twelve years, seemingly. Walking about aimlessly, for A—— was resting at the hotel, I came upon the Place d'Armes in the center of the town, embowered in trees, with a music stand or Kiosk painted in black, red and yellow stripes, and two enormous constructions like scenic drops in the theaters, which I found were backgrounds for thousands of small oil cups, and represented Oriental palaces such as we have at Luna Park, Coney Island. These later in the evening, were lighted by means of the oil cups of blue, yellow, white, green and red glass. These filled with oil and furnished with wicks would burn for hours. As dusk came on, men on ladders lighted these with long torches, and the effect was remarkable, seeming like masses of jewels outlining the architecture, which placed against the background of fine large trees formed a picture not soon forgotten. From the windows of the hotel which faced this scene, we watched the gathering crowds of peasants and well-dressed people all bent upon having a good time. The square was soon filled, so that walking was difficult. We were informed by the proprietress that "these were the bourgeoisie. All the best people," this with an indescribable shrug,

“ were at the seaside for the summer, I must understand.” The band began playing in the Kiosk, a good one, too, it was, and the lady, with another shrug, said, “ Now nothing but noise, noise all night. M’sieur must understand that these peasants, and bourgeoisie dance the whole night from ten until four to-morrow morning, and I hope that m’sieur and madame will not lose their rest, but what will you, when Ghent is en fête? ”

As a matter of fact, we *did* lose our night’s rest, and never have we heard such a pandemonium as these peasants made. The square packed with people, venders of ices and small cakes, syrup and water, must have made small fortunes, for the peasants ate, drank and danced as if their very lives depended upon the present moment. The dancing is unique, small circles forming constantly here and there in the crowd, men and women joining hands and surrounding a couple or two, who pirouette, keeping time to the music until, exhausted, they give place to others. They seem to prefer the Schottische, but I certainly did hear the strains of the “ Merry Widow Waltz ” played twice during the night. Dogs darted hither and yon between the dancers’ legs. Flanders is a veritable dogland, and the police were everywhere in the crowd attentively watching and keeping order. Their task was an easy one for everywhere good or-

der prevailed to a remarkable degree. I could but contrast the hoodlumism of our own crowds on election night, or Thanksgiving Day with these orderly people, bent only upon simple enjoyment and keeping peace. In spite of all that I had heard of the drunkenness of the Fleming at the Kermis I saw nothing of it here in Ghent which is filled with "Estaminets." Indeed, in the outskirts, and in the small villages, nearly every house is a saloon or is licensed to sell beer and the villainous potato spirits that is the ruin of the laborer here in Flanders. The sign "Hier Verkoopt men drank" which looks like English gone crazy, is seen everywhere. We leaned from the large windows watching the crowd, the lights, and listening to the shuffling noise of the feet of the multitude in the square below until we wearied of it all; and long after we blew out our candles in the tall sconces on the mantelpiece before the invariable mirror, the clash of brass mingled with the boom-boom of the large drums, the clapping of hands, the cheers and the singing of folk-songs all merged into the confusion of disturbed dreams, and it was broad daylight before the band ceased with the playing of the National Anthem. Then the peasants departed, cheering to their distant homes, and Place d'Armes was deserted save for the busy workmen taking down the strings of glass cups which they



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packed into large wicker hampers and loaded into gaudily-painted vans. Then I drew down the blinds shutting out the glare of the morning sun. The last thing I saw before I left the window, was two yawning gen' d' armes, being relieved of duty of the early patrol, and I went to bed to the musical jangle of the chimes in the belfry, sounding the quarter hour of a new day in Flanders.

One of the songs the peasants seemed to favor above the others is given below, and I wish that I could carry in type something of the enthusiasm with which they sing it. There are seemingly dozens of verses, but I could only get the proprietress to write one of them, and this she did with a great show of disdain to impress me with the idea that she was not of the peasantry.

Crossing the *marche' aux Legumes*, one comes upon a bridge, at the opposite side of which stands an immense, dark pile of stone masonry with a low gateway beneath a cross-shaped window, or opening, the walls of which are machicolated and furnished with low turrets placed at intervals against the sides and corners. This is the great Castle of the Counts of Flanders on the *Place Sainte Phairilde*, built in 868 by Baldwin Bras de Fer, a construction of great historic interest. Here John of Gaunt was born.

It is hard to believe that Ghent is changing to

# Song of Ghent.

## GHEENT.

EM. HIEL.

LEO VAN GHELUWE.

*Opgewekt.*

Zijt gij niet meer he - den,.....

*mf*

The first system of the musical score consists of three staves. The top staff is the vocal line, written in a treble clef with a key signature of one flat (B-flat) and a common time signature (C). The lyrics 'Zijt gij niet meer he - den,.....' are written below the notes. The middle and bottom staves are the piano accompaniment, with the middle staff in a treble clef and the bottom staff in a bass clef. A dynamic marking of *mf* (mezzo-forte) is placed between the piano staves.

Zijt gij niet meer't mach-tig rij - ke Gent!....

The second system of the musical score also consists of three staves. The top staff is the vocal line, continuing the melody from the first system. The lyrics 'Zijt gij niet meer't mach-tig rij - ke Gent!....' are written below the notes. The middle and bottom staves are the piano accompaniment, continuing the harmonic support from the first system.

Gij hebt fel ge - stre - den, Dat is wel ge -

kend. Dat is ge - ken door

*Poco cresc.*

gansch het land,..... Dat wordt ge -



CHATEAU OF THE COUNTS — GHENT



*cresc.* *f*

roemd ten al - len kant: Daar -

*cresc.*

Detailed description: This system contains three staves. The top staff is a vocal line in G major with a treble clef, containing the lyrics 'roemd ten al - len kant: Daar -'. The middle staff is the right-hand piano accompaniment, and the bottom staff is the left-hand piano accompaniment. Dynamics include a crescendo leading to a forte (f) marking.

om min ik Gent, ja

Detailed description: This system contains three staves. The top staff is a vocal line in G major with a treble clef, containing the lyrics 'om min ik Gent, ja'. The middle staff is the right-hand piano accompaniment, and the bottom staff is the left-hand piano accompaniment.

*ff KOOR.*

Gent, zoo - lang mijn hart zal slann. Daar -

*cresc.*

Detailed description: This system contains three staves. The top staff is a vocal line in G major with a treble clef, containing the lyrics 'Gent, zoo - lang mijn hart zal slann. Daar -'. The middle staff is the right-hand piano accompaniment, and the bottom staff is the left-hand piano accompaniment. Dynamics include a fortissimo (ff) marking for the choir and a final crescendo.

om min ik Gent, ja

*ff*

Gent, zoolang mijn hart zal slaan.

1 Zijt gij niet meer heden,  
 Zijt gij niet meer 't machtig rijke Gent!  
 Gij hebt fel gestreden,  
 Dat is wel gekend.  
 Dat is gekend door gansch het land,  
 Dat wordt geroemd ten allen kant :  
 Daarom min ik Gent,  
 Ja Gent, zoolang mijn hart zal slaan. } *3 maal.*

2 Stad der Artevelden,  
 Nijverheid en vrijheid hieldt ge in stand,  
 Gij, met uwe helden,  
 Streedt voor 't vaderland.  
 Gij, hou en trouw ten allen tijd,  
 Met vlijt aan kunst en eer gewijd!  
 Daarom min ik Gent,  
 Ja Gent, zoolang mijn hart zal slaan. } 2 maal.

3 Stad der Schelde en Leie,  
 Door het onderwijs zoo hoog geroemd,  
 Dat, als frissche mele,  
 In uw midden bloemt,  
 Gij zendt uw zoons nog overal  
 En sticht het goede bovenal.  
 Daarom min ik Gent,  
 Ja Gent, zoolang mijn hart zal slaan. } 2 maal.

modernity when confronted with a monument of this sort, for modern activity and mediæval peace cannot long exist side by side. The erection of factories and warehouses must in the end prove too much for the prolonged existence of such old-world, stone-flagged streets and squares as we find here in the Sainte Pharaïlde where the grass is springing up unheeded along the footway. Here the Flemish families live a retired life behind these old walls, and all the tourist sees is the "Portes Cochère" and the windows carefully screened with lace, and protected by strong wooden shutters, which are fastened by an iron key on the inside. Passing beneath the portal of this feudal fortress, let us ponder upon what it meant in the time of its building and occupancy. The primary design of



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its builder was resistance to attack; architectural beauty or domestic comfort took second place. One type dominated all these castles; the chief part or backbone of them was the central tower, donjon, or whatever you like to call it. It occupied the center and most inaccessible part of the structure and was the family refuge in time of war or siege. On the ground floor is an immense hall or kitchen, at one side of which is a huge gaping fireplace where one might roast an ox whole; above this, a chamber reached by a narrow winding staircase; in the solid masonry leading to a sort of council hall, is a sitting room which served for reunions, or banquets; again higher up are the sleeping rooms. All these are vaulted or heavily beamed, and a removable ladder leads to the battlements, or perchance in the massive wall is a secret staircase. The light comes from very narrow slits of windows each furnished with a worn stone seat and only to be reached by a step or two. Here one may picture the maidens of the castle peeping out over the fields, or watching the winding ribbon of white road for the coming of some expected figure. Down below on the main floor or in the court, shut in by massive walls is a large deep cistern for portable water, and at one side are the stalls for the cows and oxen. The premises are generally very large, and destined to afford asylum for the whole

village in time of siege. One comes upon oaken trap doors in the pavement, and as you lift one of these, and gaze down into the jetty blackness, you can call up visions of the knights and ladies making merry about the heavy table in the banquet hall while down below in this "oubliette" some poor devil groans, thirsts, rattles his chains and calls upon the name of the Most High for mercy and oblivion. The entrance is over a narrow drawbridge, under a portcullis with hanging chains. The passage inside is a winding one for reason of defense, and is perforated with narrow embrasures where the bowman may pick off his man, and higher up are narrow slanting openings where the ladies of the family can welcome the intruder with such pleasantries as a potful of boiling pitch or any other such hospitalities as suggest themselves to those gentle minds. Along the passage at intervals is a heavy low barbican with a portcullis, while the whole fabric is surrounded by a wide deep fosse, from which rises blank walls topped with turrets and machicolated their whole length, from which the bowmen could amuse themselves by launching various perfumed or heated objects of "affection" at the unwelcome guest. Above is a taller tower in which the sentinel kept watch upon the surrounding country. Standing before the gate of this stronghold to-day in the rain,

I tried to picture a siege, while the gen' d' arme watched me curiously from the window of his watch-box. I fancied the assailants sapping at the walls, and discharging from heavy catapults, through stone balls, blazing fire brands, or carrion; while from within came a rain of molten lead or showers of heavy arrows. The gen' d' arme now sallied forth, and with hands behind him, approached me. I gave him a civil "good day" but he would have none of it. "What did I there?" If I desired to visit the castle well and good, but if not, then "Monsieur must pass on," and deeming it best to take his advice, I passed on, but he watched me suspiciously until I turned the corner. This I well knew, for without turning I saw it from the tail of my eye. These modern Flemings have so little imagination, that it is best not to argue with them.

Planned and built more than one thousand years ago,— to be exact, in the year 868, this immense stone fortress-castle seems able to withstand another thousand years of existence. The massive blackened walls now show no signs of giving way, and its foundations lie deep beneath the moat. The great Squat Gateway was erected in 1180, and thereafter other parts of the château which plainly show different styles of architecture, due it is said to the plans of Baldwin who was lord of the do-

main and castle during the Fourth Crusade, which he led in 1202-4. Coming from Rome, where he had become enamored of Roman architecture, he altered some of the features of the stronghold to conform to the style which he admired, so in the Roman Gallery on the northeast side one may see his handiwork.

It was in this castle that Edward III and Queen Philippa were so magnificently entertained by Jacques Van Artevelde in the year 1339, the fêtes in their honor costing fabulous sums of money.

Here John of Gaunt was born in 1340, fourth son of King Edward, he became famous in the history of England. He stalked armor clad through the great hall of the castle where his father and mother sat while nobles and courtiers made merry about them, so stated the custode to us. The hall is about 60 by 125 feet, now bare of all furniture with its huge blackened fire-place at least eight feet in depth and a dozen feet wide. The high ceiling is supported by huge oaken timbers roughly carved, and now blackened by soot and time. In the castle are other rooms proportionately large, some of the sleeping chambers being fully twenty-five feet square. The stairways are quite narrow, rarely exceeding four feet in width, which is explained by the necessity of guarding the occupants

against sudden attack. A vast, winding, subterranean passage miles in length leads from the cellars to a safe outlet beyond the city walls, and was constructed for use of soldiers in case of need, as well as to provide a retreat for the Count and family. We saw the torture chamber far beneath the moat where lie two poor skeletons found years ago; they are covered by glass plates and shown under the rays of electric lights. The custode pointed silently to a sort of cage built of thick iron in which "favored victims" were entertained. The floor is of fine-beaten dry dust, loose and deep, in which the foot sinks unpleasantly, and the gloomy place, glittering candles and the close earthy smell soon gets on one's nerves.

Here in this torture chamber Jacqueline of Bavaria, Countess of Holland, was confined in 1424. Only twenty-three years of age, she was of indomitable spirit, and even this dreadful experience did not subdue her.

Outside the sun shone brightly, the trees in the grassy enclosure waved in the breeze and on the dark waters of the moat some swans swam majestically. We walked about the ramparts of the old castle, which has a watch tower at every angle. One could almost discover the marks of the steelshod feet of the sentry on the stone flaggings which

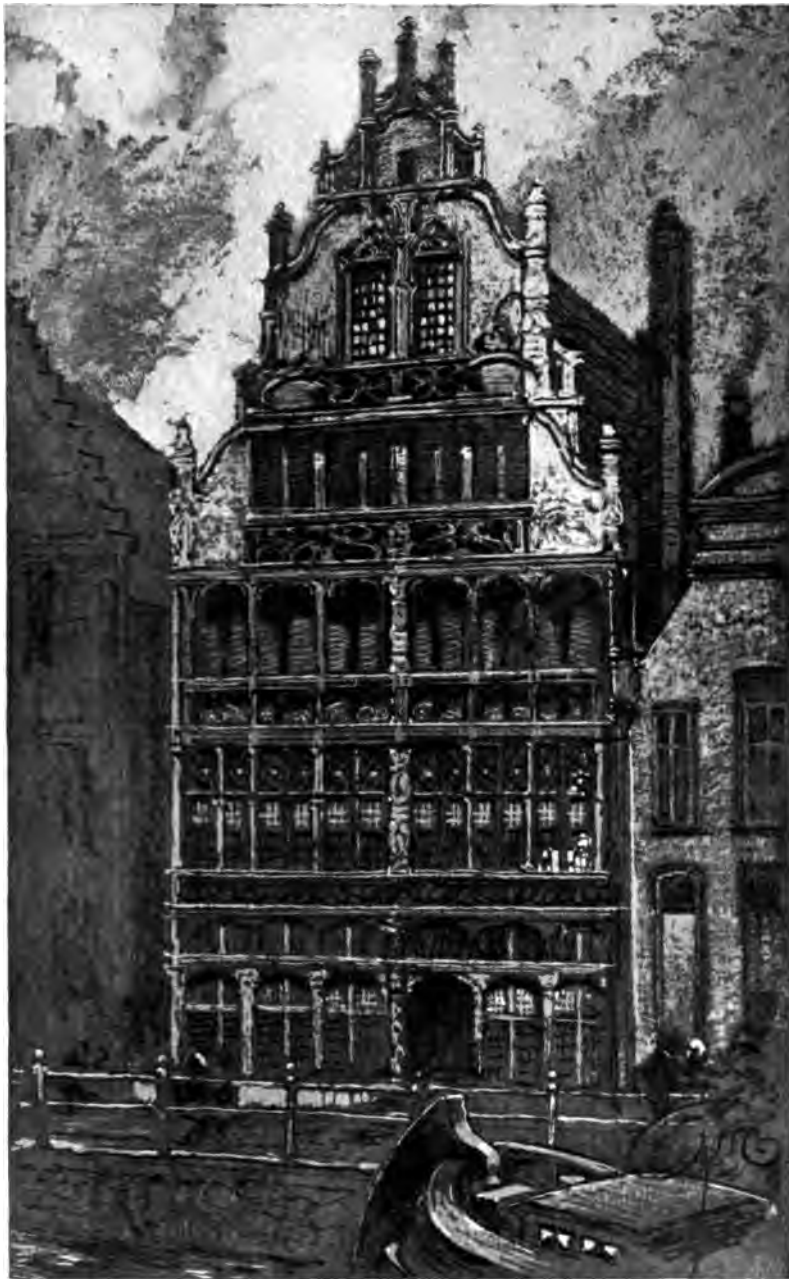
they traversed year after year in those early, troublesome days.

The cultivation of flowers is one of the passions of the people of Ghent, and the town is the center of floriculture, a passion of the Flemish in bygone times, and revived by the people only since about 1830. The Flemish gardeners are famous for their cultivation of the orchid, and maintain agencies in South America and the tropics for the collection and forwarding of rare plants and flowers, and I am told that the Belgian flower industry and trade amounts to millions of francs annually. To the families of Linden of Brussels and Van Kerckhove of Ghent, the latter a Count, is due the wonderful floriculture of the country. It was Julius Linden, I am told, who discovered the orchid and he is said to have nearly two hundred classes of this plant divided into something like twelve hundred different kinds. Count Van Kerckhove, a burgomaster of Ghent, maintains a magnificent winter garden which is renowned all over Europe, in which thousands of orchids, yellow roses and white syringa, and forests of azaleas and camellias render the air heavy with their perfume.

Ghent is the capital of East Flanders, and like Bruges is full of interest to the traveler; with its famous past unites a present filled with commercial

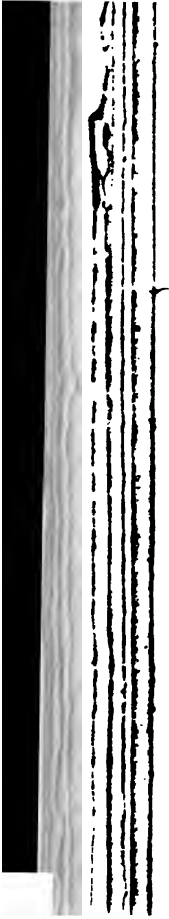
activity. Bruges has not shared this, for to-day Ghent has nearly, if not quite, four times the former's population. The energy of its inhabitants has survived its former prosperity, while Bruges despite the great new canal uniting with the sea has remained asleep. Charles the Fifth was born here in 1500 and all his life is said to have had a fondness for his birthplace, and for all things Flemish as well. He once said boastingly to François I of France, "I could put your Paris in my glove (Gand)." Jacques Van Artevelde, too, was born here, and lost his life in taking sides with Edward III of England. Jacques' son, Philippe, was Captain General of Ghent, and led them against Bruges, dying upon the battlefield in 1482.

John of Gaunt, or Ghent, son of Philippe of Hainault, Shakespeare's time-honored Lancaster, and father of Henry V was born here in 1340. During the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries Ghent was considered the most important town of Flanders, indeed, of northern Europe. The lofty and remarkable houses of the Guilds, still standing on the quays are a striking feature of the town, recalling, as they do, the prosperity of the days when it was under the patronage and suzerainty of the Counts and Dukes of Flanders and Burgundy, enjoying such rights, immunities and privileges as made it well-nigh independent. In the preserva-



HOUSE OF THE WATERMEN'S GUILD — GHENT





tion of these rights and liberties the strenuous burghers were not loath to go to war, and the formidable forces they were able to put in the field, made them feared as well as respected. The belfry contained the celebrated bell "Roland" of which Longfellow wrote, and there are paintings, statuary and treasures to be found which would take volumes to even enumerate. The Cathedral of Saint Bavon is filled with pictures and wonderful carved woodwork, and here and there in the Crypt, beneath which we wandered for hours unable to leave its fascinations. The old "Rabot" bridge and gates of picturesqueness with its two towers and the Spanish-looking gable between them, are all reflected in the still waters of the canal and embowered in heavy foliage. Again and again we returned to Saint Bavon. On one occasion we heard evening service performed by the priests in loud strong voices. I remarked that both priest and choristers appeared careless and inattentive, their eyes wandering and the whole being done in a most perfunctory way; the tonsures on the priests' heads seemed to me rather dirty, certainly the one who knelt just before us was so, and we moved away from him.

In Saint Bavon we saw the first oil painting by one of the Van Eyks, "The Adorations of the Lamb." It shows a number of persons in the midst

of a green field adoring the Lamb, and it is certainly curious. There is here a good Rubens, representing the "Reception of Saint Bavon into the Abbot of St. Amand." He is distributing his goods to the poor, leaving his wife, a fine, fat, buxom dame to go her own way. The priest who showed us this in the chapel politely explained it to us, but with a certain air of unction, as if he hoped that such an example might not be without edification; and he said, "He leaves his wife," pointing to the plump, comely woman at the lower part of the picture. I said, somewhat rudely, "I think she had a fool for a husband," just to try him, at which he seemed truly enough shocked, glancing at me with a sidelong look, and bowing low, he left us. He carried his shovel hat under his arm, and as he turned away, I saw that there was a hole in the heel of his left stocking, and that his shoes had *rubber* heels. I was not aware until then that they were worn here, but afterwards I saw them in the shops.

The public library contains a really fine collection of books, formed from the libraries of the various monasteries which were suppressed or destroyed. It is open nearly all day to everyone, and we wandered through the well-filled rooms without restraint, although the uniformed guardians kept close watch upon our movements. At dinner the table d'hôte served a somewhat motley com-

pany, and its beginning was lugubrious in the extreme; none of the diners seemed to be acquainted. I struck up a conversation with my neighbor, a thin young man, who told me that he was a student, and that he had written a book or paper upon chronic dropsy in Latin containing his theories respecting that disorder, and quoted some of them to me between the soup and the roast. I thought him well informed, but of his Latin I was somewhat suspicious, and told him so to his face. Far from being offended, he received my doubts with most respectful condescension. Now I know very little Latin, so I was immensely flattered when he asked my opinion on a sentence, and when I disclaimed an intimate knowledge of the classic tongue, he refused to believe me, and invited me to go to a lecture at the university with him. This was formerly a Jesuits' College and it has been so much enlarged and improved that it now is a noble edifice. I saw theses proposed for disputation by the University of Louvain affixed to the hall on a board. They were such as might have suited any royal university in the world. A prize had been given that day for the best essay on the subject, "The part of Flanders in the Crusades." Thus the students are taught the history of their country. Some of the professors are knights of the Belgian Lion and wear small orders in the left lapel of their coats,

and the consequence is that the soldiers must present arms to them as they pass the sentry boxes.

They say that the class in philosophy is not large, that the Flemish are not yet up to philosophy, which I readily believe. The student showed me a book on general law written by one Hans, a professor of which he waxed enthusiastic. He asked me if we had cheese in America, which I thought so good, that I gave only a general answer. I was so noncommittal that our conversation soon lapsed, and then we saluted and said farewell — after I had presented him with a good Havana cigar. It seemed to be the custom at the table to first help the priest and afterwards the ladies, and several times I helped A—— from a dish which I intercepted in the hands of the maid as she had to pass me to and from the kitchen. I saw that the priest who sat at the top of the table did not relish this act of mine, but I blandly ignored his manifest indignation. The language at the table was mainly in the Flemish tongue. The Flemings speak French very badly, and are not easy to understand because they do not articulate. The Flemish tongue is difficult to learn, and this difficulty is mentioned by some as showing a merit or delicacy in the language. I have heard the same notion respecting the Welsh and Irish. I gather from their conversation that the Flemings think much more of the

price of a picture than its beauty, and concerning a book, they will say it was bought for so much, or could be sold for a stated price. Talk to-day at the table was mainly upon the subject of Beer of which prodigious quantities are consumed at the table d'hôte. I have tasted that of Louvain which is highly esteemed, but there are thirty or forty other sorts of Beers, all more or less bitter to my taste, but none so unpleasant to me as that called Faro, which is thin, pale and sour. A stout Flemish lady who sat up near the head of the table entered into a loud and violent dispute with her neighbor as to the superiority of the Walloons (I gather that she was from that district) over the Flemish women in cleanliness and morals and ended by loudly calling out, "It takes twelve Flemings and one pig to make thirteen swine," which was certainly impolite of her, but no one took offense, and she then subsided. She had a loud voice, but when upon leaning forward, I was able to see her face, I found her not at all ill-looking. From time to time the priest glanced at her with what seemed to be an air of shy impudence. The Church is certainly in evidence here in Flanders. I noted that even the butter on the table is stamped I. H. S. A certain kind of cake called "Galette" was passed as dessert. This is much esteemed here, and is a kind of gingerbread, flat, square, and pierced with

square holes. I may mention that no one but the priest got much of it, for when I was ready to taste of it there was little left but the crumbs.

In the hallway after dinner I met the lady who had argued about the superiority of the Walloons. She had evidently been told that we were Americans for she asked me if we had high hills in "Americanewyork" and said that for her part she could not bear to look at hills because they made her melancholy. I thought this curious for the Walloon country is very hilly in contrast to the flatness of Flanders which she affected to despise, and I think that she may have wished for an argument with me, but I did not take advantage of it, if this was her object.

#### THE FRIDAY MARKET IN GHENT

Before the first streak of dawn the peasants began to pour into the town until the roads leading to the Beffroi from the surrounding country were filled with long lines of wagons. Huge wagons painted green and drawn by heavy, hollow-backed Flemish horses, in tandem, their harness brass-mounted, and betasseled. Curious high-waisted carts of varnished oak with a sort of cab such as is commonly seen upon engines, perched high up in front wherein sat the driver; small carts with three wheels drawn by patient-

looking gray donkeys, laden with large burnished-brass cans, and piles of savory cheeses peeping from the straw; low carts with two wheels drawn by dogs, sometimes two, sometimes as many as four; large, hungry-looking beasts with sides bare of hair from the rubbing of the harness; carts drawn by men, and yes, even women; women large of waist and brawny of arm, some in gaudy bonnets with impossible-colored flowers perched upon caps of priceless lace handed down to them as heirlooms, and only worn on such occasions as this, their sunburnt, muscular arms bare to the elbow, and their necks encircled with strings of bright coral beads and Brummagem jewelry; wagon-loads of bright-eyed girls, rosy-cheeked, lace-capped and clad in brilliant jackets and snowy kerchiefs; sleepy, cross-looking fakirs from perchance the neighboring city in their variegated, decorated carts, silent now, but later on with ready repartee, and coarse jokes the better to coax the hard-earned francs from the cautious peasant, in return for worthless knives which will not cut, and flashy jewelry, and watches which refuse to go after the first day or so. Carts laden with old scrap iron, with pots and pans, with cups and saucers, with piles of copper and brass kitchen utensils, with cabbages and bright rows of carrots, symmetrically arranged, with strawberries and



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cherries; with great baskets of eels alive and squirming, all bound for the market place before the huge gray church. In the market place there is much bustle and with the first flush of rosy light from the sun, which illumines the top of the square tower, the placing and sorting of the merchandise begins. The scrap iron is arranged in symmetrical rows upon the pavement, and the fruit and vegetables are temptingly placed to catch the eye of the buyer. There is much squabbling and gesticulating among the peasants in which the offices of the gendarmes are necessary. The booths have already been erected the night before in long lines and in avenues; each man knows exactly where his booth is, for he has hired the place from the city whereon his wares are to be found each market day. These places are held from father to son, and often handed down as a legacy. The city fee which they pay per annum, is seemingly a large one, often, it is understood, as much as 250 francs per year, so the profits must be considerable. From this figure the tax dwindles down to almost nothing. The market people go from town to town through the year, now at Bruges, now at Ypres, and again at Courtrai, in regular order, so that one may see the same faces week after week upon the different market days. The waffle wagon is always a feature of these mar-

kets surrounded by a struggling crowd of peasants, all eager to taste the hot savory morsels. The odor of frying fat, however, is extremely unpleasant to the more educated nostrils, and as the waffle irons are rarely washed from one year's end to the other, and the same fat is used over and over again the waffles are to be avoided by the tourist.

The chapman is another prominent feature, his ware consisting of huge sheets of printed songs, and highly moral tales embellished with rude pictures, gaudily colored by stencil. He attracts the crowd by means of a sweet-toned pipe played by one hand. The peasants surround him in crowds listening open-mouthed to his highly-colored descriptions of the songs and tales. Here the old clothes man is supreme; among his piles of tatters and rags, a peasant occasionally draws a prize in the shape of a worn-out military coat from which the buttons have been cut. Next to him is a vender of clocks, those highly-ornamented wall affairs with heavy, pendent weights of brass, and bowls full of antiquated silver watches, some with repoussé cases. I saw one representing Rebecca at the Well, and signed Cochin, which was offered at fifteen francs—three dollars! and I bought it. Rings mounted with large diamond chips, and heavy brooches of the peasant fashion are ridiculously cheap. Haggling is expected and the

price asked is never considered by the wise buyer. I have seen repoussé belts weighing nearly half a pound each of solid silver, enough to set the collector wild with desire, sold here for the weight simply. But the spoons should be looked at with suspicion; the dealers have bought up nearly all the good examples, and real antiques are rare. I saw one ship spoon of the rarest pattern artfully placed among a lot of rubbish and fancied a bargain, but upon examination, I found it to be a modern cast and a clumsy one at that. I said as much to the sharp-eyed Israelite who stood at my elbow but he only grinned and shrugged his shoulders with upturned palms. At ten o'clock at the sound of the bell the peasants take their breakfast; the dogs are lying about in their harness heavily muzzled. Sleepy donkeys are standing with hanging heads and ears drooping. The large gray horses are eating from the tails of the wagons, the shafts of which are pointed high in the air. For the moment bargaining ceases, and the odor of coffee is in the air at the Estaminets which bear curious signs such as "The Black Pig," "The Green and Gold Hat," "The One-Legged Man." The farmers are excitedly discussing the price of grain and potatoes, literally foaming at the mouth, and gesticulating the while. Beer flows in streams from the barrels, a thin, watery, sour beer

called *faro*, loved by the peasants, and the air is blue with tobacco smoke. Women are squatted anywhere and everywhere in the streets. The Fleming cannot be called refined in the least sense of the word, and the tourist is often shocked at the behavior of the lower classes in public, not that they are more immoral than the peasantry of other countries, but they have singular ideas of what we call propriety.

Here is a singular-looking wagon, long and narrow, laden in the center with pots of brilliant geraniums. Each end of the wagon holds huge bunches of broom straw in small bundles, and these are used to clean the pipes of *mynheer*. The voice of the Cheap Jack is again heard from beneath his scarlet umbrella, in rivalry with the quack doctor, who holds an unfortunate boy by the head while he flourishes a formidable pair of forceps before his face. After much talk incomprehensible to the peasants, but effective in holding their attention, he thrusts the forceps into the mouth of the wild-eyed boy, and pulls out with a dexterous twist of his wrist, a long sound tooth which he waves high in the air. The boy gazes at it stolidly and the peasants thereafter submit their teeth to him at varying prices and with varying effect. I suspect that the tooth was not the boy's own, but one which he held in his

mouth for the purpose. Now the streets are thronged by farmers and their wives and daughters, who are busily buying and pricing in the shops. Walking is difficult for the sidewalks are rarely more than one yard wide and are roughly paved with the square Belgian blocks the same as the street. Wagons are passing and repassing constantly, the drivers of which pay no attention to the surging multitude who must have care for their safety. By eleven o'clock the booths are being taken down and the horses reharnessed to the wagons ready to take the farmers home, after the dinner hour. By one o'clock the once busy square is being swept by scavengers. A few belated wagons are being packed with the empty baskets and panniers. Occasionally the tones of a sweet-sounding bell are heard from somewhere above in the gray old tower, where the jack-daws are circling about against the pearly gray sky.

The Friday market in Ghent is over.

## *Mechelen*

**R**ISING above the level, green, cultivated plains is seen an enormous square-topped gray bulk against the sky, its base hemmed in by small, red-tiled roofs appearing between the dark green masses of trees. This is the tower of the cathedral which the architect dreamed of making the tallest spire in the world. The tower which surmounts this vast fabric is the most characteristic in the whole region. Here the Primate of Belgium maintains the headquarters of administration of his authority, which is not inconsiderable since it covers, I am told, both Bruges and Ghent, and gives him votes in the Chapters of Namur and Liege, and influence at least in the Great University of Louvain which is not far distant. The language spoken is purely Flemish, if Flemish can be called, as its admirers insist, a pure language. The town itself better

preserves its national characteristics perhaps than any other, although not far removed from the French tendency which is very strong in Brussels. The market place is surrounded by purely Flemish-gabled houses, and the sluggish waters of the rather ill-smelling river reflect the gray walls and the dull, red-tiled roofs most charmingly. Catholicism is a most powerful unit here. The struggle between Luther and Loyola marked the line separating the ancient from the modern in Flemish architecture, and nowhere is it better illustrated than in Mechelen. It has been said that the modern Jesuitism succeeded to the ancient Mysticism without displacing it, and the installation of the first in the very sanctuary of the latter has manifested itself in the ornamentation of the churches throughout Flanders, and indeed this certainly strikes one in traveling through the region.

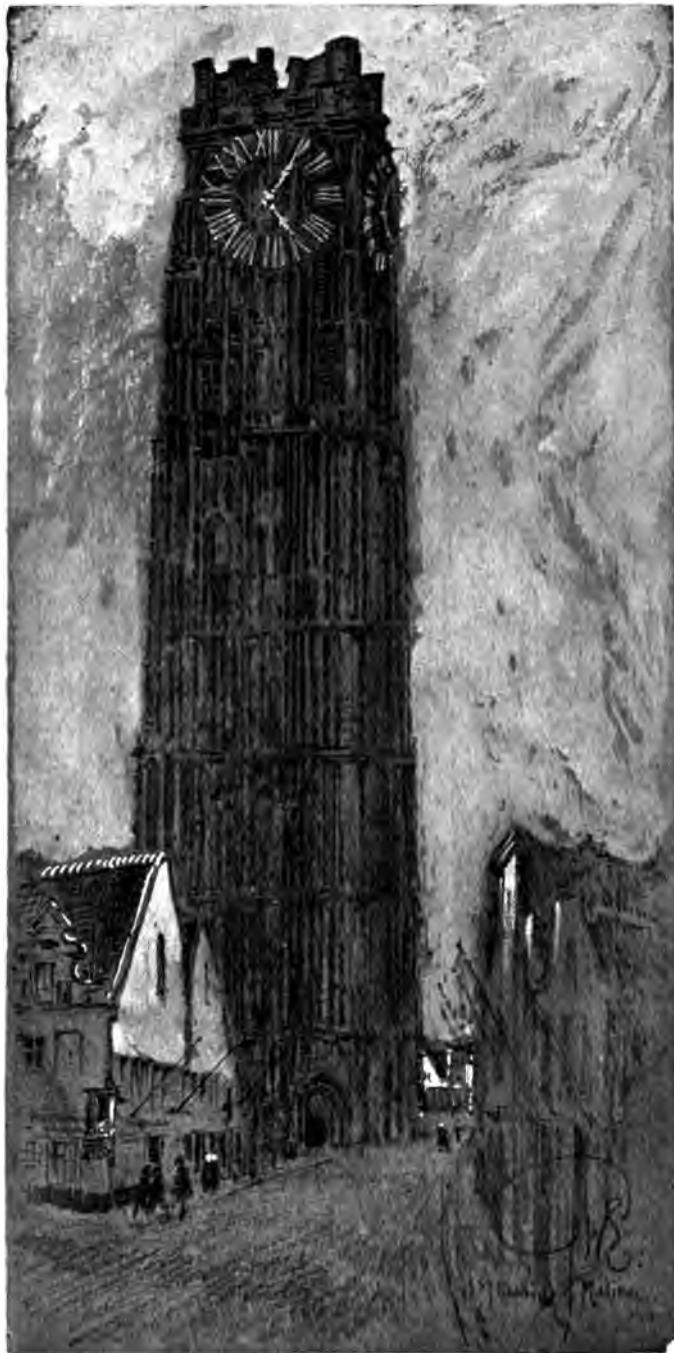
In Mechelen the people jealously retain the integrity of their ancient tongue, and many Flemish books are published there. The great Church of St. Rombold has important works of ancient art, and in St. Jean is a beautiful altarpiece by Rubens representing the "Adoration of the Three Kings" and a magnificent pulpit in oak by Verhaeghan. St. Rombold is famous for its remarkably silvery chimes of forty-five bells, masterpieces of Flemish Bell founding, and the night of my arrival these

were played by hand for two hours on the occasion of a festival of "Beiiard" while the square below was black with people listening to the folk melodies. At the opposite side of the square, adjoining the recently restored "Halles," a fine building in the purest Renaissance is being constructed, which is certainly a credit to the town, and an honor to its architect, attesting as it does to the prosperity and civilization and high artistic sense of its citizens. Indeed Flanders fairly blooms, if I may use that expression, with exquisite architecture and one cannot help marveling at its beauty. Whence did it come and how did it so develop here? It certainly found a most fruitful soil in this low-lying country and the people have borne it a most constant and loyal affection. The Gothic style which flourishes here produced most marvelously the cathedrals, and then followed the wondrous Town Halls which enjoy more than one common family trait. And there are ancient, lace-like Halls ornamented with niches filled with statuary, and choir screens (Jubé's) of cunningly-carved stone which preserve to us the memories of the half-forgotten past. In the hands of the modern Flemings these are being most carefully restored (since 1830) in the towns of Louvain, of Ypres and Ghent, Bruges and Mechelen.

The magnificent dream of Keldermans, the



architect selected by Marguerite and Philip of Savoie to build the greatest church in Europe, was unhappily, never realized, but the plans (in the Brussels museums) drawn with a pen on parchment sheets and pasted together show what a wonder it was to have been. Charles V showered him with favors, made him Director of Construction of the towns of Antwerp, Brussels and Malines, and this discernment of his put the artistic seal of perfection upon his dynasty and during this period Jean Keldermans planned and built the Bishop's Palace, the tower of St. Rombold and assisted at least in the work upon the wonderful Town Hall at Louvain. His brothers Andre, Antoine and Mathiew, all followed in his footsteps and most brilliantly maintained the family name. Some authorities insist, however, that it is to Gauthier Coolman that St. Rombold must be attributed, but without prejudice to this master hand, we may well let the matter rest, for tracing the sober and most exalted thought in beauties of the work. Keldermans represents above all the height of ogival architecture of the last period, which culminated in the wonderful spire, which Vauban calls the "Eighth Wonder of the World." Upon the four faces of the tower are vast "Cad-rans" or clock faces, the largest in existence. The measurements are as follows:—



THE TOWER OF ST. ROMBAUD — MECHELEN



|                       |          |
|-----------------------|----------|
| Diameter .....        | 13.m.50. |
| Circumference .....   | 41.m.    |
| Hour Hand .....       | 3.m.62.  |
| Minute Hand .....     | 4.m.25.  |
| Figures (Roman) ..... | 1.m.96.  |

Mounting the 313 steps we arrive at the first gallery, where during each hour of the night the watchman most poetically blows the melancholy bugle notes which tells the burghers that all is well in the town, and here one night in early times shone the full moon through the tall windows, which seen by a nocturnal Fleming caused him to give the alarm of fire which aroused the inhabitants, thereby fastening upon Mechelen the celebrated sobriquet "Maanbluschers" (moon quenchers).

Throughout the town are, of course, many other remarkable churches containing gems of art in painting and statuary which would each require a separate volume to mention. In Notre Dame will be found the statue styled "Our Lady of the Broken Back" (O. L. V. van Scheeve lee). The crowned Virgin carries the infant on her left arm, her body strongly inclining to the right after the style of the fourteenth century, caused the people to "affectionately" name the statue as above, and the legend runs, "Upon a certain day, so long ago that no one knows when, the Sacristan neglected

to sound the Angelus when suddenly he heard the bell ringing, and running to the tower he found the rope tied to the left hand of the statue leaning to the left, which remained ever after in that position."

Two pictures "The Miraculous Draught of Fishes" the far-famed, by Rubens and a "Temptation of St. Anthony" by Coxie, the young, who painted it in 1607, for the Guild of Jardiniers are here. The latter picture is in triptych form, the wings representing St. Paul visiting St. Anthony, and the latter Saint rendering the last ministrations to his friend. On the reverse is a representation of Christ. The Rubens was painted for the Guild of Fishermen in 1618, who paid the artist 1,600 Golden Florins for it, as well as for the three small pictures in the center underneath. All the chapels in this church contain notable works of art, while the altar by the artist Boeckystuyns, Langhman and Vander Meulen, constructed in 1690 after the design by Pastorana, is one of the artistic achievements of the time. A tablet in chronogramme gives the date as follows.

ALTARE DI VINAE s Yna XI eXtrUCtUM.

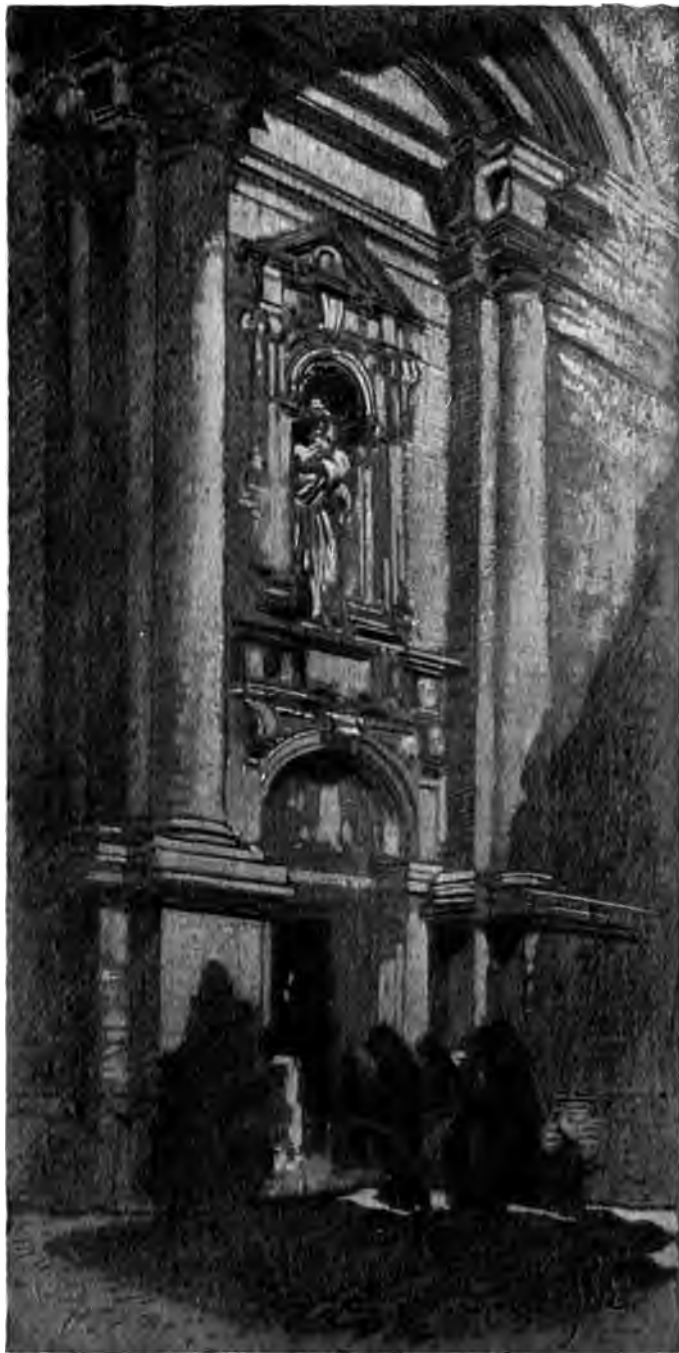
It is a sort of "arc de Triomphe" of large and imposing dimensions, some ninety feet in height and occupies all the space of the choir. In the center is the picture of "La Derniere Cene"

signed "Joannes-Erasmus Quellyn pictor Cæsarese Majestatis 1690," and is of the most unusual composition. The third personage on the left is the portrait of Gilles de Wit, curé of Notre Dame from 1684 to 1691, who was a great partisan of the doctrines of the Jensenists and who was condemned for his writings, banished from the town, and retiring to Rotterdam, died there in exile. Tradition says that the Quellyn painted his own portrait as the chief personage in the center of the picture. In the floors of the choir proper, are many sculptured tombs in high relief and all of these including the pictures are in a sad state of deterioration, and should be cared for before it is too late.

The churches of Saint Peter and Paul, Saint John the Baptist and the Evangelist, and the small church of Saint Catherine hold priceless works of art in paint and marble which would take volumes to describe, and the same is true of another which I almost missed — Notre Dame d'Hanswyk with its curious, squat, many-windowed tower, which I saw reflected in the muddy waters of the Dyle when crossing the bridge, and likewise, I unexpectedly came upon the "Beguinage" in an old quarter of the town, where the little, low, red-roofed houses shelter a community of gentle-mannered, placid-faced women, who live in a semi-re-

ligious state after the ancient rules laid down by Saint Begga. Here after depositing a considerable sum of money they are permitted to live in groups of three and four to each house, each coming and going as she pleases without taking any formal vow. Their days are given up to household duties, the offices which they elect to fill in church or parish work among the poor and sick of the town; an order not found outside of Flanders. Each day brings for them a monotonous existence of the same duties at the same hours, waking in a gentle quietude, rhythmized by the silvery notes of the convent bell which recalls them to the sentiment of their pious life, oblivious of the busy outside world. In the Beguinage each door bears the name of some saint, and sometimes in a niche above, mossy with age, is a small figure of some holy personage. The heavy door, nail-studded, is generally furnished with a grilled wicket, where at the sound of the bell of the visitor, a panel slides back and a white-coifed face appears. This quarter is not exclusively inhabited by these gentle women for often there are other habitations of those that love the quiet and solitude of this half-forgotten corner of the town.

This Beguinage was suppressed in 1798, and it was not until 1804 that the order was restored to any of their former rights, nor were they permitted



CHURCH OF THE BEGUINAGE — MECHELEN







to wear the costume of white headdress and black robes until the latter part of the year 1814. In the church I saw a portrait of the Beguine, Catherine van Halter, the work of I. Cossiers and also another picture by the same painter, representing the "Dead Christ" on the knees of the Virgin surrounded by the disciples, in which the artist seemed to revel in the ghastliness of the scene. The picture is a superior one, however. A tiny figure of the crucifixion carved from one piece of ivory by Jerome du Quesnoy is preserved and shown to the favored ones. In execution it is admirable as a work of the highest art, and the expression of the face is all that could be desired. On the Place de la Boucherie is the old "Palais" now used as a museum and containing many objects of the greatest interest and value such as medals, miniatures and embroideries, and a great "armour aux Chartes" filled with parchments, tomes and seals, pertaining to the history of the town. Also a curious strong box or chest with immense locks and keys, upon which reclines a strange wooden figure with a grinning face and clad in the ancient costume of Mechelen. This figure represents "Op Signorken" called the "Vuyle Bruydgrom" and bears a reputation and history which cannot be well written in English. Suffice it that the inhabitants, that is to say the peasants, are devoted to him,

and at times he is borne in some of the processions when the town is "en fête." There in the Rue de L'Empereur are the remains of the ancient palace of Margaret of York, the wife of Charles the Bold, who, after the tragic death of her spouse retired to Mechelen. This is now the Hospital of Notre Dame. In the musee Communal is a fine "Christ on the Cross" by Rubens. The only remnant of the former great fortification of the town, I found is the ancient Porte of Brussels, but this is well worth while studying and there are very quaint bits along the yellow waters of the Dyle which flows through the town, and is crossed by many small stone bridges. On the Quai-au-Sel are a number of ancient façades which are most picturesque and strange with their unusual pinnacles. An artist would find a mine of material near the Botanical Garden, where the Dyle reflects the mossy walls of the ancient houses, and there are rows of tall, weather-stained posts in the stream to which boats are moored. Throughout the town are market places filled with peasants, carts, and huge, hollow-backed, thick-legged horses, and there are many fountains and tall pumps of great artistic merit surmounted by the blackened figures of the half-forgotten heroes of ages bygone, and over all is the dominating tower, vast, gray and mysterious, the more impressive from its unfinished state.

## THE BELLS OF ST. ROMBOLD

The carillon of bells in the tower is famed the entire country round for its size, its sweetness of tone and harmony, and its power. In addition to the six bells used for ordinary church services, there are forty-five others, one of which weighs, I am told, nearly eight tons, requiring twelve men to ring it. Thirty-two of the bells were cast by Peter Hemony at Amsterdam in 1674, the others are by Waghereus, Steylaert van Aerschot, Dumery, and the great master A. Van den Gheyn. These bells are so finely attuned that they form a most harmonious assemblage. The carillon has two keyboards, manual and pedal (voet Klavier), which are connected with the bell tongues by long wires. For striking the hour and its subdivisions there is an automatic machine somewhat like the barrel of a music box (called a "Rammet") into which brass pins are fixed, and these catch loops of wire connecting with the hammers which strike upon the outside rim of the bells. M. Josef Denyn, son of the great Denyn, has for years been the town "Carillonneur" and his services are sought far and wide wherever there is to be found a chime of bells. As a boy he watched his father at the clavier in the great tower, learning all his secrets, and finally when the elder was no longer able to work the

heavy cumbersome pedals of this primitive instrument, he succeeded him at the age of nineteen, and since 1881 has played in nearly all the chief cities of Europe as well as in his native town of Mechelen. Denyn plays every Monday night during August and September. He is known as "Stadsbeiaardier" and his rendering of the "Oucd Volkliederen" has endeared him to the people.

#### THE KERMESSE AT MECHELEN

Once a year, generally in July, sleepy Mechelen rubs its eyes and gives itself up to a heavy sort of gayety. The tiny Grand' Place, usually so deserted and grass grown, is dotted with gorgeous booths, merry-go-rounds, and caravans brilliant in tinsel and vermilion, the smoke from the lamps of which, for it is by night that the Kermesse thrives, goes high in the air towards the grand gray tower of St. Rombold. The groans and snarls of the bag-pipes, the noisy rumble of large organs and the clash of cymbals awake the echoes of the market place, to which the peasants are flocking for miles about from Lierre, Duffel, Wavre, Boom, and Londerzeel, in high-waisted wagons, hay-cushioned and drawn by huge hollow-backed Flemish horses, all bell-rigged and brass-harnessed; in low, two-wheeled carts drawn by savage-looking, yellow dogs of a nondescript breed, and in tilburies whose

white canvas hoods gleam in the soft light of evening, still others drawn by harder looking shaggy ponies. Some are entirely filled by rosy-checked, chattering girls from the farms, who, alas, have almost discarded the beautiful cap of Mechelen lace which was once so generally worn, for an ugly sort of topknot made up of artificial flowers and black gauze. Other wagons are laden with sweet-smelling clover, upon which is perched Mynheer and his comfortable-looking, shrewd-faced "vrouwe" who is generally the superintendent of the farm and to whom a five-franc piece represents a good day's profit from the cheese and butter. Others crowded with thick-featured young men from the fields, whose high silk caps, are set oddly upon their heads, and who wear their shiny blouses awkwardly. The roads leading into the town are thronged also with long lines of the poorer peasants, men, women and girls who own no conveyance of any sort; laborers upon the roads, the potato and beet fields — tanned a dark brown by the sun, and with hands thick and calloused by hard work. Boats float upon the river and the canals; boats painted some yellow and others of a beautiful green; some with one mast and a sail, tanned and looking like brown velvet; others heavy, high in the bow and stern, and drawn often by women and girls who are harnessed like animals

with a huge wide strap which goes across their arms and breasts, sinking into the flesh as they strain at the tow rope, leaning far forward, their heads hanging, their arms dangling as they sway to and fro, while Mynheer calmly sits on the tiller and steers. All are bound for Mechelen, and the fleeting joys of the yearly Kermesse. From afar the glare in the sky from the market place can be seen, and the massive cathedral spire is aglow. As the peasants pour in through the high-towered gates, the noise of their sabots upon the uneven stones is like the clattering of a giant mill wheel, and they present a solid appearance like an army in motion. The air is filled with shouts and laughter and now and then a company of girls, who are arm in arm, will break in song, and not unmusically. Although it is nine o'clock, it is not yet dark — twilight lingers long in the low country — but in the heavens a few stars show here and there, and are reflected in the sluggish current of the Dyle, over the chief bridge of which the peasants are now clattering noisily. Children, too, are among the throng, queer-looking, old-faced children in short-waisted coats, brass buttoned, and skirts that spring voluminously from beneath their arm pits and reach the ground — children to whom the sight of a real doll is a novelty, and who later on are to sit at the long tables in the estami-



THE BRUSSELS GATE — MECHELEN





nets and drink huge mugs of foaming beer like their elders and consume piles of greasy waffles, the smell alone of which is enough to offend the taste of an American; who will stand open-mouthed and eager, in long, struggling lines before the toy stands, their fingers itching to handle and caress the beautiful objects, and who will eagerly give up their scant sous to the jaded-looking woman who presides over the wheel of fortune, the prize of which is a sheet of paper containing as it may be, ten, twenty or fifty dabs of suspicious-looking sugar which they lick off with delight. Whatever number the brass arrow points out, that number of dabs is handed over to the winner. In the square, one side of which is filled with the gaudy tents of the merry-go-rounds, the peasants struggle and push in a solid, evil-smelling mass, watching at one side the tossing and tumbling horses and lions, upon which are straddled the peasants screaming with delight to the blatant blare of heavy steam organs, and upon the other, the antics of a clown upon a staging, his face whitened and a black spot upon either cheek, ringing a harsh-toned bell. Occasionally he roars out a joke in Flemish directed at the peasants, to which they respond with force. At intervals a couple of frouzy-looking women in soiled pink tights walk affectedly across the platform before the show tent

followed by a hideous dwarf who mouths and jeers at the appreciative roars. Ordinarily the peasant is silent, but upon fête occasions makes up for his erstwhile taciturnity. Here is the strong man lifting huge weights, marked 70 kilos, by his little finger, and offering incredible sums of money to any ordinary mortal who will lift one of the weights to his shoulder. His wife stands near him, and somewhat destroys the effect produced upon the crowd by his strength by inadvertently picking up one of the weights and easily tossing it aside. Before another booth a hoarse-voiced showman roars out the attractions of the fat woman of incredible weight, becoming purple in the face in his simulated enthusiasm and the frantic endeavors to coax the phlegmatic, open-mouthed mynheers who seem somewhat skeptical, to view her vastness at ten centimes a head. Here is a stalwart young peasant in varnished yellow "klompen," as the wooden shoes are called, wielding a heavy mallet, with which he strikes a peg which sends an arrow far up a pole registering the force of his blow. Evidently he thinks himself a champion as the cunning owner of the apparatus pins a gaudy medal to his breast, since he does not know that each before him has received just such a medal, no matter what number the arrow reaches, and he walks away proudly



showing it to his sweetheart. At intervals small portions of colored fire are burned, now green — now red, lighting up the quaint Flemish gables of the houses, and throwing complimentary shadows of the poles and flags and people against the façades, magnified out of all proportion. In the estaminets, dancing is indulged in, which becomes fast and furious even as the night grows. The sanded floors are crowded with couples turning and twisting to the raucous tones of large orchestrons turned by jaded-looking, heavy-eyed men. Beer flows by the barrel, and later on a villainous sort of brandy made from potatoes, a glass of which is often sufficient to set the peasant in a murderous frenzy. The police are everywhere in and out of uniform, hands clasped behind their backs, their watchful eyes taking in each movement of the crowd. The air is heavy with the fumes of tobacco and the smoke of the oil lamps which comes pouring out of the doors of the estaminets in heavy reeking clouds. Overhead the vast square fabric of the tower rises majestically, its top lost in the blue of the heavens, and even above the noise of the moving peasants, the hum of five thousand voices, the coaxing shouts of the showmen, the beating of drums, the blare of trumpets, and the countless, indescribable noises of the crowd, there

300 *SOME OLD FLEMISH TOWNS*

comes to us the faint mellow jangle of the chimes,  
followed by the hollow boom of the big bell of  
St. Rombold — striking twelve — The Kermesse is  
well on.



IN AN OLD BACK STREET

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IN AN OLD BACK STREET





## *Louvain*

**U**PON emerging from the rather imposing station, one sees the exquisite pinnacles of the Town Hall rising before the roofs, at the end of the long and uninteresting street, and half hidden by a tall, white, modern building seemingly given up to apartments, which quite spoils a vista that would otherwise prove a delight to the eye, and it is a sad comment upon the taste of the authorities, which view is later confirmed by their indifference to the rapid deterioration of some, if not all, of the really fine pictures by the early masters hung in the Museum on the second floor. The town itself is clean and well-kept, a small stream, the Dyle, running through it, and crossed by numerous bridges, offering an occasional pretty bit of old wall and mossy, red-tiled roof reflected in the yellow water. The streets are full of young priests, for there are many schools

here besides those of the Great University, and I saw daily a number of them studying the tombs and paintings in St. Peter's Cathedral which faces the wonderful Hotel de Ville. There are good shops, the people are well dressed in the streets, and apart from the immense, blackened pile of the cathedral and the façade of the Hotel de Ville, an air of modernity is over all. The Brabantians are much more up to date than the people of Western Flanders; indeed, they pride themselves upon being different and speaking a different dialect. They think themselves really a suburb of Brussels in a way, and the small train takes them to and from that metropolis in very short time. But the Louvainese are really most provincial in many ways, for instance, they will dine heavily in the middle of the day at 12:30, taking light suppers at 7:30 in the evening, and after coffee or a glass of beer at one of the numerous good and well-kept cafés on the principal street, they will go home and to bed by half-past nine, and by ten o'clock the burgher has retired, the lights are out and the town "sleeps." I let a day pass before studying the Hotel de Ville, which is one of the greatest of the Flemish mediæval monuments. I felt that I must rest before seeing it, and it certainly answers all one's expectations.

Schayes, in his "History of Architecture,"

Vol. IV, p. 39, says: "Not only is the Hotel de Ville of Louvain the most remarkable municipal edifice in Belguim, but one may seek in vain its equal in Europe," and while it was known that its designer's name was Mathiende Layens, nothing of his history could be found until in 1846 two historians, Van Even and Thys, discovered in a parchment that he was a native of Neufvilles in Hainaut, a small, obscure hamlet; that in 1445 he succeeded one Jean Keldermans, as a "Master Mason"; that he died in 1483 in his own house (de Koithoek), and was buried in St. Jacques, where no trace of his tomb can now be found. But what greater monument could any man have than this masterpiece in stone? I sat at a small café opposite studying its exquisite details now masked by much heavy scaffolding, for at least the authorities have awakened to the danger of its deterioration. The stone of which it is built is soft and yellowish and turns black with time, and the smoke of the town. Although only about twenty miles east of Brussels and on the main line to Liege, I had great difficulty in Antwerp in getting any information about the town. The Belgians are not great travelers and know very little about any save their own native cities or towns, and they regard the tourist as mildly insane. Therefore I was not greatly surprised at my difficulty in getting information about East

Flanders. Louvain is the seat of the well-known University and the headquarters of the Clerical party of Belgium. Once a most important industrial center with a population of 200,000, it has dwindled to 45,000 or thereabouts. Like many of the Belgian towns its downfall is due to the oppression of the rulers of old, in this case the Dukes of Brabant, and to the spirit of independence shown by its inhabitants, which caused them to revolt and transfer elsewhere the fruits of their labor and industry. There is a most remarkable cathedral, St. Pierre, opposite the Town Hall, dating from the fifteenth century, which it is said suffered severely in a great gale in 1604, which blew down its spire and many of its statues. It has never been restored, and its huge doorways, its high exterior balconies, its narrow pierced windows, evidently for bowmen, all render it in appearance to a vast mediæval fortress, which it undoubtedly was. Its interior is as remarkable, and contains many altars, statues, tombs, and in its nine chapels are great paintings, notably one by Dierick Bouts, "The Martyrdom of St. Erasmus." We wandered through the streets, some of them very narrow and winding, up to the ancient University, which was formerly the Clothweavers' Hall, and dating from the fourteenth century. It is very dilapidated and quite

sinister-looking, and now contains a great library of inestimable value.

The decadence of Louvain began at the end of the fourteenth century, following the dissensions between the Nobles and the Artisans, always those turbulent Artisans, who objected to the Nobles living upon them, hectoring them and restricting their liberties, rude fellows they were, "unmanly louts" the Nobles called them when they refused to submit to their "most reasonable" demands — as for instance, "Le Droit de Seigneur." Is it any wonder that they turned upon the aristocracy, one of the principal chiefs of the "Gens de Metiers" having been thrust forth and assassinated by some of these nobles at Brussels? When the news arrived, the people rushed in fury upon the dwellings of the Nobles who escaped to the Hotel de Ville, but the crowd discovering their retreat, burst open the doors and seizing the aristocrats threw them from the windows where they were promptly "piked" by the burghers. Massacre succeeded massacre, and thus began the long series of wars and sieges which resulted in the downfall of Louvain. Wenceslas was Duke of Luxembourg, he who afterwards became the Emperor of Germany. A younger son of Jean of Luxembourg, this Wenceslas, blind King of Bo-



and elaborately-carved wooden pulpit is famous, but I did not care for it particularly. It represents Saint Paul (life size) falling from the back of a horse; the whole is carved in oak. The most singular object in the old church is a figure of Christ clad in a dark, plum-colored robe of what seems to be velveteen. This figure is greatly venerated, because, says the legend, "It disengaged one arm from the cross on a certain occasion and seized the thief who attempted to steal the Chalice from the Altar." A richly-dressed woman was on her knees before this figure which is in the gloom at the side of the altar, and as we studied the figure with its arm hanging hidden in the long sleeve, she raised her hands high above her head and remained in this attitude of supplication. I could not see her face, for her back was towards me, but her hands were small, white and beringed. Although we were in the church for fully half an hour, when we had made the circuit and studied the paintings, the altar, the beauties of the heavy-carved, bronze rails, and the remarkable Gothic Tabernacle, I saw her still in the same kneeling, supplicating attitude before the awful, hanging figure on the cross. It is recorded in the archives that, formerly, an enormous tower stood beside the portal of this church, and this was "the highest tower in all Europe, measuring one hundred and seventy-five meters



without the cross, and that on the 31st of January, 1604, a terrible storm came over Louvain and overthrew this wonderful tower, which, falling, pulled down its neighbors, so that all three tumbling upon the central pavilion, an immense ogival doorway or portal, with a crenelated gallery flanked by turrets — the whole was almost destroyed." At the right is a sixteenth-century gable, and on the left the ruined façade of what must have been a magnificent specimen of mediæval architecture, its sculpture broken and only fragments of balconies and niches remaining to show what it must have been. The remains of a handsome turret at the angle of an "estaminet," and some poor-looking shops mask the former impressive proportions and belittle its dignity. Elsewhere great windows filled with brick, wretched plastered repairs and great gaps in the masonry, show how outrageously the palace of Charles V suffered in the sieges. The pavement all about, below the walls, is strewn with fragments of broken glass, and upon looking at the long high windows above I could not discover that new glass had been put in the windows recently, for many of the small panes were broken and others missing, so these broken fragments ground into the pavement and between the stones, must have been there for many years. We were followed about by a most importunate cab-

man who used every endeavor to induce us to hire him for a drive, and finally when he found that his efforts were in vain, became first abusive, then tearful. It was only by motioning towards a small, fat policeman, who was dozing on the corner opposite that I succeeded in getting rid of the fellow. We found Louvain most amusing, very clean, with good shops, well-dressed people and all that goes toward the equipment of a progressive town.

The exquisite Hotel de Ville reminds one of the caskets or Reliquaries which Kings and Queens used to give to be placed upon the high altars of cathedrals. There is the same simplicity of design, the same beauty of line, a rectangle with gables emphasized by a graceful tower at each pinnacle, and another at each angle, the whole finished with a crowned spire, tipped with a golden "flèche." Constructed in this model then, it really serves its purpose of a reliquary, enclosing the memories of a great and golden past, and shining in the sunlight as I first saw it, its many windows ablaze with golden and ruddy light from the sky, which seemed like the jewels and enamels on the casket, the *vraisemblance* was complete and satisfying. One feels that this exquisite piece of work should be enclosed in a museum. The foliations which cover it, the purity of style, the amazing design from tower to base fills one with wonder and enthusiasm.

Three stages of tall windows, between which are "colonnets," a series of statues under "dais" most beautifully chiseled, lead the eye to the roof along which a crenelated gallery runs, protected by a flamboyant balustrade. The towers at each angle are also in two stages of platforms of open work like gray lace, and finished by a gilded iron flèche shining in the sunlight. Over all is a most prodigal lavishment of lace work in stone, and the result is bewildering. Again and again one examines it only to find new wonders, fresh delights.

*The Legend of Margaret  
the Courageous of Louvain*

**I**N the great church of St. Peter between two absidiolate chapels in a triangular space repose the ashes of beautiful Margaret the Courageous, and this is the legend about her. "In the year of our Lord 1235, Maître Armand and his virtuous spouse, honorable hoteliers, lived in the Rue de Tirlemont, and after much praying and reflection decided to consecrate their lives to the service of God. Their niece, Margaret, a lovely girl, whose disdain for the young men of the town, gave her the surname of 'La Fiere,' resolved in spite of her youth, she was only eighteen, to follow their example. The Hotel which they kept so well was sold for a considerable sum, and this being known in the town, as well as the fact that the money was hidden upon the premises, excited the cupidity of eight young butchers of evil fame, long suspected of unlawful and violent deeds.

These came one evening to the old couple pretending that they wished shelter for the night from the storm which was raging. Demanding wine, Margaret went to the cellar to get it from the cask, and in her absence the ruffians strangled the old couple and were in the act of robbing the chest of the treasure, when the young girl returned and discovered them. They seized and bound her, and in deliberation as to how best to dispose of her, they decided to put her to death, but the leader overcome by her extreme beauty offered to wed her, provided she would fly with him. More courageous than ever, Margaret scornfully refused. Then one of the miserable scoundrels for ten marcs of silver strangled her, 'and her soul, white and pure as the angels,' ascended to heaven to the throne of Jesus, in whom she so well believed, and there became 'L'unique 'espoux dont elle ambitionait l'amour.' The corpse of this young martyr was thrown into the waters of the Dyle in which it floated, illuminating, by its pale radiance, the whole 'vallee.' Upon a rock where his chateau was situated, Henry I sat that night and saw the silvery light floating upon the dark water of the Dyle. Calling his lady, Marguerite of Flanders, he pointed out to her the mysterious light, and together they crept down to the river bank and drew forth the body of the lovely girl which they ten-

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derly bore to the castle. There in the morning flocked the people, and the clergy had prepared a grand catafalque upon which they laid her clad in rich vestments and over her said high mass. She was then laid in a costly tomb in the church of St. Peter, and this is the legend of Margaret la Fiere, the different episodes of whose blameless life are so exquisitely reproduced upon the walls of the Chapel in wax paintings by P. J. Verhaegen."

## Conclusion

THE Flemish coast or littoral, from the boundaries of Holland to France, presents the same picture of stretches of sand dunes overgrown with a wiry, grayish-green grass, against which the waters of the North Sea and the English Channel beat impotently. The pale yellow and gray beach of hard sand extends from east to west for about seventy kilometers, irregularly and unbroken save for the locks and canal entrances, which here and there give access to the inland towns. Few trees are to be found on this long range of sand hills, save near Coxyde where a hill called the Hoogen-Blekker, rises about one hundred feet above the surrounding country. Coxyde is a small fishing community near the old town of Nieuport. Here behind the dunes is a stretch of country known by the quaint name of "Ter Streep," about a mile in width which separates the rich farm land



FLEMISH WATERWAY AND BOATS





of the Flemish plain from the sand dunes. In the fall and winter the dunes are ever in motion, the sand being blown hither and thither in blinding sheets by high and furious winds. It is said that in a night the contour of the dunes is so changed that mariners on the sea would lose their bearings but for the distant towers which serve as beacons. History says that this coast was formerly covered with thick forests, evidences of which in the shape of stumps, are often washed up on the sand after storms. During the tremendous storms of the twelfth century, the whole coast of Flanders and Holland was changed and it was due to one of these tempests that the town of Nieuport was founded. When the populace of Lombaerdzyde, then a flourishing seaport town, were driven inland by the breaking of the dunes, and the inundation of the sea, to make a new dwelling place on higher ground, they called the place Neoportus (New Harbor).

The construction of the dykes was begun by Baldwin of Constantinople, who appointed watchmen to guard the safety of the works, but the constructions were so illy built that the sea broke them down, and existence became so hard, that the villagers abandoned the coast and went north to Germany.

One of the most remarkable facts is that twenty-

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five years ago, this Flemish, sandy waste on the sea was a barren strip of sand hills with only here and there a small collection of fishing villages, while now it has developed into an immense pleasure resort, with populous towns, handsome villas and casinos all linked together by railways from end to end and furthermore connected by a broad, brick-paved esplanade called a Digue upon which are the great hotels, that in the summer season are thronged with merry, pleasure-seeking, cosmopolitan crowds. I am told that the resident population is more than fifty thousand, and that in the summer more than one hundred and fifty thousand strangers are registered at the different hotels and villas which line the coast.

These dunes which the old lords of Flanders fought so hard to protect from invasion, have thus become veritable mines of gold for the descendants, for the price of land is advancing, having more than quadrupled in value during the last twenty years.

Some of the small towns behind the dunes are most characteristically Flemish, notably La Panne (meaning a hollow) and Adinkerque. These are inhabited by fishermen and their families in small, one-storied cottages, covered with red tiles, over which in the summer, grow roses and trailing vines. Here are hedges and trees lending pleasant shade

to the roadways, lined with the small, white cottages nestling behind the sand hills. Formerly none but artists knew of these delightful spots, but within the last few years the summer people have discovered their charm, and now new stucco villas have sprung up on every hand, and the shrill whistle of the small "vicinal" railroad is heard. Architects have vied with one another to produce novel cottages, so that any grotesque architectural form of house is hailed as "style Duinbergen," for in this little town freak ideas have flourished. To the artist, these innovations are most disquieting to be sure, but it cannot be helped, and there are, nevertheless, certain advantages in the excellent supply of drinking water, the electric lighting and the convenience of the regularly running little, black, railway train connecting the towns.

One of the sights of the coast is the annual pilgrimage of fishermen to the church of Notre Dame de Lombaerdzyde. We came upon long lines of these hardy, barefooted men walking in silence along the road behind the high-sanded dunes on the way to the shrine. They are bound not to speak a word until they have reached the church and offered a prayer to "Our Lady," and we saw them kneeling in a solid phalanx before the altar, in the old gray, weather-beaten church, where there are hanging models of fishing boats given in thank-

fulness for preservation from drowning at sea. While the statue of the Madonna is an object of great veneration by these simple people, it did not avail them in that terrible storm which destroyed the region in the dark twelfth century. From the top of the dunes near Nieupoort, there is a magnificent view to be had of the typical scenery of Flanders, veritable subjects painted by Ruysdael and Hobbema. Here between two lofty hillocks of bare, grayish-yellow sand runs a broad causeway bordered by low, dark-green trees, at the far end of which appears the red roofs and buff walls of the houses of Lombaerdzyde, over which rises the tall spire of the church, and at the right and left are dimly seen other villages, spires and clumps of poplar trees planted in regular rows which melt into the haze at the horizon. Coxyde is unique because here the fishermen pursue their calling upon horseback, riding out into the boiling surf armed with long poles from which are suspended nets which they scrape along the bottom, fishing up anything which may come their way. The catch is mostly shrimp, and the sight is certainly wonderful, reminding one of a company of halberdiers of the Middle Ages charging the enemy. Women, too, push heavy poled nets along the shore in quest of the shrimp; poor bedraggled-looking creatures, with little to betoken their sex, clad as they are in



SHRIMP FISHERMAN AT LA PANNE



heavy breeches and wearing thick oilskin or fustian jackets. There is bitter poverty here among them, and their lives seem hopeless, but we found them cheerful and courteous withal. This custom of fishing upon horseback in bands is peculiar to the Flemish coast and has existed for generations.

We went by the vicinal train from Furnes one bright, sunny morning to Nieuport in order to see just where the great battle of the dunes was fought, and we found a sad, little, deserted town with silent streets, paved with rough boulders and lined with heavy gray buildings close-shuttered and forbidding-looking. In some of the streets, men and women sat in the doorways mending nets and making small, wooden kegs, in which to pack fish, I presume. The quays are rather deserted, with here and there a tarry-looking fishing boat or two.

A small English steamer with a rusty funnel, snorted and puffed at the railway terminal. On the bridge an ancient mariner lolled with folded arms, pipe in mouth. I saluted him, and he nodded back not uncivilly. Some heavily-laden barges piled with wood were working laboriously through the great locks of the canal which connects the Yser with Ostend. On the stern of the small steamer was the word "Ghoole" in gilded letters, and projecting from a brass-bound porthole was the head of a bright-eyed, shaggy terrier watching



me intently. The sails of the fishing boats are tanned dark brown, and the hulls are painted black; over all is the pervading odor of salt fish and tar. The ancient strongholds and fortifications have long since disappeared, and only here and there can one find traces of them in the mounds about the town.

In the midst of a green field stands the gray tower of the great Templars Castle which alone serves to remind one of what was once the scene of the battle. We walked about it at a distance, but did not enter, A — being tired with our long ride over the plains. We traversed the wide, deserted square where we found the Cloth Hall with its low arches opening on the "place." In the doorway was an old man who, for a franc each, allowed us to mount the stairs to the Hall above where we found a very mediocre exhibition of paintings by amateurs. The restoration of the hall is badly done, I think, and inadequate. The Gothic Church with its heavy tower emblazoned with the Arms of Nieuport, is one of the largest in Flanders. The chimes were playing and a few people were in the church which was undergoing renovation, and that is all that we found here. Of the "bloody battle of the Dunes," between the Dutch and the Spaniards, nothing remains of the walls for which they struggled; even the field now

lies buried underneath the shifting sand dunes, which cover alike the bones of the victors and the vanquished.

We sought for, but did not find any bargains in delft or copper. The Flemish farmhouse is barren of such nowadays, although the interiors are picturesque enough in themselves. There are generally two living rooms in which sometimes are to be seen valuable pieces of carved furniture, but as a rule the dealers have stripped the country of curiosities. The rooms will have ceilings beamed and blackened by time and furnished with the long, curious, Flemish sheet-iron and brass-trimmed stove projecting into the room, its flat, horizontal stovepipe garnished with pots and pans. The windows are deeply sunken with seats in the walls, and the effect, while not so picturesque as the interiors of Holland houses, has a character all its own and quite paintable to an artist.

Magnificent pasture-lands are found throughout Flanders, and the whole region is famed for its butter and cheese making. In every meadow the grass seems to grow with remarkable luxuriance, and herds of sleepy-looking, contented, black and white cows are met with on every hand. It is most enjoyable to idle in the midst of these sunny pastures outside the quaint towns, where fields of buttercups gild the landscape, with here and there

long lines of blue-clad peasantry at work in the flax-fields, their voices coming pleasantly to one from the distance. Gentle breezes stir the silky-green sea of grass, the birds sing, and one hears the tinkling of the chimes from distant bell-fries. It has been said that day and night are set to the music of these wonderful bells of Flanders; the same bells which sounded the dreadful tocsins during the Spanish occupation. Imagine then, these sweet sounds repeated over and over on every hand, and you get a good idea of the country of the Flemings. Long, straight roads cross and recross the flat plains, and these, with the innumerable canals, make a vast checker-board of the country, and the simile is the more evident from the great number of castles, towers, and cathedral spires, like knights and pawns on the board. The country people, it must be admitted, have not very hospitable manners to the stranger, but I am convinced that it is due only to their stupidity, and not to any lack of cordiality, or intention of rudeness. They are simply — well — boors, uneducated, poor and sodden with drink. I must say that they are not attractive in appearance even on Sunday, when they are dressed in their stiff Sunday best. The lovely old lace cap, with its flapping ends is fast disappearing and in its place, is an ugly sort of black worsted hood with a topknot. Even the

wooden shoe is disappearing; the peasants in the cities and towns will not wear them now, and one sees them only on the feet of the laborer in the fields.

Throughout Flanders will be found the Beguinages which are most characteristic of the country in which Catholicism is so flourishing. There are, it is true, Beguinages in Holland, but in Flanders they are to be found in most flourishing condition. Their origin is uncertain but they are thought to have been founded in honor of Saint Begga, centuries ago. The communities consist of spinsters or often widows, who take none or few oaths binding them to the church, and save for their own conscience, may return at any time to their homes. They are said to pay a stated sum of money into the funds of the order upon entering, and after a period of probation along with the novices they are assigned to the small houses within the walls, where each Beguine occupies private apartments with her own grated door in the wall whereon her church name is emblazoned, for she takes a new name upon entering the order. Their days are spent in making lace, educating poor children and caring for the sick and needy. The order is under the care of a Mother Superior appointed by the Bishop of the Diocese. I am told that the oldest Beguinage is that at Bruges, founded in the thir-

teenth century on the Lac d'Armour. Here on this lovely sheet of water mirroring the gables and the soft, velvety greenness of the trees, is one of the most delightful spots in the country. Legend has it that should one greatly desire something, one must then go to the bridge covering the "Minnewater" and there standing at the center post to the south, at the hour of midnight, when the chimes begin, "Make then thy wish, and what thou desirest, if good for thee, shall come to pass, but beware what thou asketh!"

Crossing this small bridge, and passing through a gateway, one finds a place set with small brick houses around a pleasant, green square embowered in tall trees. The houses are whitewashed, with curious "stepped" gables in the Flemish fashion, and the blinds or shutters of the windows are painted green. Here the Beguines live and worship in the dim aisles of the Church, with the ever-open door. It is a pretty sight to see the novices and the white-coifed sisters walking together on the brick-paved paths in the half-light of evening after services, and this is the way I delight in recalling it.—We would, generally after dinner, take a little stroll about the town in which we happened to be, as a rule bringing up before a church or cathedral, the doors of which are rarely closed.—How deep the colors in the great glass windows

— for a moment one feels in darkness, then gradually the vast design of the Gothic artist unfolds itself to one's vision: gradually rises up before one, the profuse sumptuousness of the great altar, its tall images in marble, its velvet and gold hangings, its heavy, bronze railings and massive candelabra of silver, all revealed in the dim, perpetual light of the sacred lamp which hangs before it. One treads lightly with subdued spirit over the marble pavement. All is still save the half-hushed mutterings of the gliding priests. All around are groups of kneeling worshipers, some prostrate, others gazing upwards with arms crossed in mute devotion, some beating their breasts and counting consoling beads. A bell tinkles — the mighty organ bursts forth involuntarily; one sinks to one's knees, listening to the rising chant of the solemn choir. Moving from a side chapel, comes a procession with a band of crimson-clad acolytes in advance waving censers, and the melody of their distant voices responding to the deep-toned invocations of the priests. One sees in these cathedrals many side chapels, most of them filled with fine paintings. In this church which I have in mind, I saw through a gilded, iron railing a saint upon his knees extending his enraptured arms to receive an infant glorified. What mingled love, enthusiasm, devotion, and reverence

